TRANSCRIPT · EPISODE 229

Keep Your Cool: 4 Idioms About Control

English learning resource · EN

Full episode script · English

90 lines

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

It is the opening night of a small art exhibition, and nothing is going as planned.

The photographs are late, one light has failed, and the first guests are arriving.

How do you stay in control?

Hello, and welcome to Idioms.

I'm Martin.

And I'm Julia.

Today is lesson 18, and the topic is control.

Before we start, one important thing.

Our website has a free course, and this episode is lesson 18.

The lesson includes examples and practice, and the direct link is in the description.

In this lesson, we practise four idioms, and each one does a different job.

And you can practise the same expressions before your next real conversation.

Now, let's hear what happens at the exhibition.

Martin, the photographs have not arrived, and the first guests are waiting!

Julia, take a breath.

You have to keep your cool.

I'm trying, but one light has failed, and the display table is in the wrong place.

If we don't act now, this will get out of hand.

You're right.

I feel like I am going to lose my grip on this whole opening.

No, you won't.

You made the plan, so you are in the driver's seat.

Okay.

I'll call the driver, and you move the display table.

Perfect.

The driver says the van is stuck in traffic.

Then let's show the guests the artist's sketchbook while they wait.

Good idea.

Thank you for staying calm.

Thank you for making the decisions.

The photographs arrived twenty minutes later, and the guests explored the exhibition.

We kept our cool, and the artist was ready when the pictures arrived.

That opening was stressful, but we used four idioms.

Let's look at them one by one.

First, keep your cool.

It means to stay calm in a difficult situation.

We change the word your: "I kept my cool," or "She kept her cool."

For example, "Even when the customer shouted, the waiter kept his cool."

The opposite is lose your cool, when you become angry or upset.

People also say it as advice to someone who is stressed.

Second, lose your grip.

It means to lose control of a situation, or to stop managing it well.

We often say lose your grip on something, for example, "He is losing his grip on the project."

It often suggests a longer problem, not only one bad moment.

Third, in the driver's seat.

This means you are the person in control, the one who makes the decisions.

We say, "I'm in the driver's seat," or "She put me in the driver's seat."

For example, "In this project, the client is in the driver's seat, so we follow her decisions."

It can describe a good position, because you decide.

Fourth, get out of hand.

It means a situation becomes too difficult to control.

Here, the subject is usually the situation: the party, the argument, or the problem.

For example, "If the children get too excited, the game can get out of hand."

It usually describes a problem that is becoming difficult to manage.

You can use it as a warning before the situation gets worse.

So, remember the difference.

With keep your cool and lose your grip, a person is the subject.

With get out of hand, the situation is the subject.

And in the driver's seat describes who is in control.

Now let's try a recovery challenge.

Imagine four more situations where control matters.

Each one needs a different expression.

Listen, and choose the best idiom.

Number one: "The children are shouting, but the teacher is calm.

She is trying to ..."

Keep her cool.

The teacher stays calm in a difficult moment.

Number two: "Nobody knew who was in charge.

Then Anna said, 'I'll decide, so now I'm ...'"

In the driver's seat.

Anna is now the person in control.

Number three: "The small argument became a big fight.

It really ..."

Got out of hand.

The situation became too difficult to control.

Number four: "He has too many tasks, and he doesn't know where to start.

He is starting to ..."

Lose his grip.

He is starting to lose control of his work.

Great work.

Four situations, four useful choices.

Here is the difference to take away.

Keep your cool means stay calm.

Lose your grip means lose control.

In the driver's seat means you decide.

Get out of hand means it is too difficult to control.

Remember, lesson 18 of our free course is on yourenglishtoolbox.com.

It has more examples and more practice, and the direct link is in the description.

Thanks for listening.

See you next time.