

46. Something About Being a Tool

Hello, Welcome. I'm Renée Valentina and this is Musing Interruptus. Musing Interruptus is a podcast for sharing thoughts and stories and enjoying idiomatic phrases. You can read along; the transcription is in the description of this episode; click on *continue reading* to open a Google Doc with the complete transcription. The idiomatic expressions are in italics. Try to get the meaning from the context and then look them up to see if you were right. If you like it, follow and share it, but more importantly, continue the conversation. Drop a comment with your answers to today's questions! I love hearing from you! The background music is called [Vernouillet by Blue Dot](#).

Idiomatic expressions are a lot of fun because of the imagery they evoke. By using a set of words to express an idea, you add color and pictures to your words with more words. For instance, instead of saying someone has a low IQ or is stupid, you can say, they are not the *sharpest tool in the shed*. Imagine the shed, a little house where you keep and organize your tools. Can you see the tools? There might be some hanging on the walls, like a hammer. If someone is as smart as a bag of hammers... can you visualize the hammers in a bag? Can you imagine picking it up and *lugging it around*? Now, you can remember this image and use the phrase when describing people like the marker bandits. By the way, I'm not making this up. Some guys wanted to rob an apartment complex; they decided that coloring their faces with a permanent black marker would suffice. [If you look at the pictures](#), you'll see it didn't. But I bet most of you would know not to color a mask on your faces, especially not with permanent markers. Back to the tool shed, you might say that they are *as smart as a bag of hammers*. You might also find a toolbox in that shed. If you open the toolbox, you could see a ratchet, a pair of needle nose pliers, a screwdriver, a tape measure, a spirit level, and even saws. If the saw is dull, it won't cut through wood (or whatever else you need it for, Jeffrey Dahmer). If the saw is not sharp, it is useless. Hence, it might not be the sharpest tool in the shed. We say people are sharp when they are intelligent and show it. Intelligent people are useful; unintelligent people *end up* being *made fun of* on TikTok and called Karens. Karens might be people who not only are unintelligent they are demanding and entitled, a *real tool* if you ask me. They are not the sharpest tools in the shed. When you describe these people, the phrase, *the lights are on, but nobody's home* is useful. The house is empty the same way people deduce or *work out* their skull is empty. The lights are on, meaning you know they are alive because there is life in their eyes. This phrase reminds me of the Stepford Wives movie, in which women were implanted with nanochips to make them submissive animatronics. The science on this is not clear, but it's a great visual for the phrase *the lights are on but there is nobody home*. Speaking of lights, we can also use the adjective *dim-witted*. I like that one. Dim as in weak, wit as in the capacity to use words in a clever and humorous way (Cambridge Dictionary). A person that is dim or *not very bright*. They might be *slow on the uptake*, which means it takes them a long time to understand something. This has happened to me. I blame it on needing to drink more water. At least, that is what I tell myself.

As a child, I always thought that reading made people intelligent. Books were intelligence vitamins. However, the more I read, the less intelligent I felt. It is an exercise in humility that is

delightful. Oh, the worlds I have not come up with, what a treat someone else has, and I have the possibility of reading about it. It is the possibility of having access to information and knowledge that I would have otherwise not had. The motivation to read was a balancing act between two interests: not being stupid and recreation. Intelligence is developed in many different ways, not just reading. Playing is very important; dancing, doing sports, socializing, being exposed to people who think differently, appreciating different artistic expressions, creating art using your imagination, and learning about new things, learning new words and using them tend to stimulate the brain in the best possible ways. Although I think that watching people do stupid things, things that are incongruent with objectives, is helpful, I don't know if that makes us smarter, but at least we won't make the same mistake. Unless you are *a few sandwiches short of a picnic*, however, I might use that one to refer to someone a bit crazy or *bananas*. But we'll save that for another Musing Interruptus.

Thank you for listening.

What's your favorite tool? How do you develop your intelligence? How many sandwiches do you pack per person for a picnic? What are your favorite idiomatic expressions?

I'm listening

There are a myriad of ways of calling people stupid. These are just some. Listen. Read along. Share your thoughts [with me].

Spotify: <https://tinyurl.com/2s4mrceh>

Website: <https://tinyurl.com/yysvk9ax>

Apple: <https://tinyurl.com/44nmtrpj>

Amazon: <https://tinyurl.com/57vbrey9>

I ❤️: <https://tinyurl.com/22m2auw4>