



Cool Tools Show Podcast Episode 307: Wendy Frauenfelder
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Mark: Welcome to the Cool Tools show. I'm Mark Frauenfelder, Editor in Chief of Cool Tools, a website of tool recommendations written by our readers. You can find us at cool-tools.org. I'm joined by my co-host Kevin Kelly, founder of Cool Tools. Hey Kevin.

Kevin: Hey, it's great to be here.

Mark: In each episode of the Cool Tools show, Kevin and I talk to a guest about some of his or her favorite uncommon and uncommonly good tools they think others should know about.

Mark: Before we introduce this week's guest, I want to give a shout out to our Patreon supporters. Patreon is a great way to support everything Cool Tools does, including our newsletters, podcast, video channel, and review website. This week we'd like to thank the following Patreon supporters. Dean Putney, Denelle Cunningham, Evan Barker, Graham Medland, Hans Reisbeck, Helen Hegedus, Jeremy Kerns, Jim Lesko, Jim Spofford, John Pollock, John Burdenberg, Keith Ohn, and Ken Altman. If you'd like to become a patron of Cool Tools, visit patreon.com/cooltools.

Mark: Our guest this week is Wendy Shefte. Wendy is the family's handyperson. She also likes to bake wild yeast sourdough. She's obsessive about doing the New York Times Crossword Puzzle and Spelling Bee every day. And she loves to make and share cocktails on her Instagram called [oh_happy_hour](https://www.instagram.com/oh_happy_hour). We'll give a link to that. And she also is my sister and has always been into really interesting tools and things like that. So welcome to Cool Tools, Wendy.

Wendy: Hi, thanks for having me on.

Kevin: It's a real pleasure to see you virtually through the magics of the internet.

Wendy: It's nice to be here. Thank you.

Mark: It really is. And you were on a couple years ago and had some good tools and you often give me suggestions for things to put on Recomendour newsletter, which I do, because you have a good eye for useful thing. So let's just get started. First tell us about this one that you told me about a while back called the Peeps Eyeglass Cleaner.

Wendy: Yeah. So this is a cool little gadget and I can't even remember where I saw... I probably saw an ad pop up for it and I went to Amazon to look for it. And the overall rating is really good like four stars. But if you start to go down and look at the reviews, the first like 20 are one star reviews. So I was like, uh-oh. I wasn't really sure, but I was looking for something that was just easy to clean my glasses. Because I seem to smudge all the time. So I decided to give it a shot and I got one and I immediately liked it.

Wendy: The thing I like about it's you don't have to use any kind of fluid with it. So I feel like it's a one step process, not a two step process. You can carry it in your purse, put it in the car. I have one at my bedside table and I have one down by my computer. It's got two little pads that feel like they have suede, which I don't think it is, but they're soft like that. And you pinch your lenses in between the two pads and just rub it. And at first you're going to see some smearing going on and you're going to think it's garbage. And if you just keep it up for like-

Mark: Hence the one star reviews. They didn't do it long enough.

Wendy: Probably, probably, and then rub it maybe about 10 seconds and your lenses are just crystal clear. And when you put them back in the case supposedly they recharge. I don't know how you recharge these because there's no electricity in it. But that's what they call it. I guess it sort of resets the pads.

Mark: Static electricity.

Kevin: So they're like mini tongs in terms of... Slipped in a case, there's kind of a case and you take out these little mini tongs that have the pads on the ends where the tongs would be and there's a little like tweezer like action that you squeeze against the glass surface while you're I guess circulating them around the glass?

Wendy: Yeah. That's exactly what it is. And the little pads have kind of a unique shape. They're sort of like rounded triangles. So they have these little points that get into the corners of your lenses and all the way to the edges. So I actually think they're great. I give them five stars.

Kevin: Okay. And it appears that there's some kind of liquid embedded in the pads. So presumably they're being recharged, maybe they're getting recharge with liquid. But can you add... Do they dry out or how long do they last for?

Wendy: I honestly don't feel any liquid I'm touching them right now. There's no wetness to them at all. They say something about carbon and...

Kevin: Fluboks modulators and hesile fields. Yes. OK.

Mark: Retron tabulators.

Kevin: Yeah. Right.

Wendy: Yeah it was for sure like a Jetsons invention. But I think they were great. I'm giving them to people that I know. My husband stole a pair of mine. I had to get another pair. I think they're really good.

Kevin: Yeah. Well, I don't know if you can believe everything you say on Amazon, but it says exclusively used by NASA. So...

Wendy: I don't know about that.

Mark: Like [inaudible 00:05:14].

Kevin: Yeah.

Mark: So it looks cool, yes.

Kevin: Well, they're little and you have a choice of colors in terms of the covers. That's cool.

Wendy: Yeah. And it has one other feature which I didn't see until I was giving a set of these to my parents, but there's a little slider on the lid, sort of the lid of the unit. And if you slide it up a little brush pops out. So I think if you had some lint or debris on your lenses is you can get that off first with the little brush.

Kevin: Oh yeah.

Mark: And they also have replacement pads for it. Four replacement pads for \$20, which is the same price as the tongs with two pads. So I guess they eventually do wear out, but it said it's 500 uses per pair of pads.

Wendy: Oh, all right.

Kevin: Okay.

Mark: So if you clean your glasses once a day, it'll last about a year and a half or so.

Wendy: Yeah.

Mark: That sounds like a good deal.

Kevin: And these are called Peeps.

Wendy: Yep.

Kevin: Peeps Eyeglass Lens Cleaners.

Mark: Okay. So you have another tool. It's the wristband.

Wendy: Okay. Yeah. This wristband. So I do a lot of the handy work around the house, installing ceiling fans, repairing parts, replacing parts. I put in new doorknobs all over the house. Stuff that takes a lot of little bits and pieces. And you know, I end up either sticking little things in my pocket, especially when I'm going up on a ladder or in my mouth, which is gross. And finding this little wristband, which is lightweight, easy to put on, it's got Velcro. I have a tiny, tiny wrist and this goes down enough to fit my wrist. I think they say it's unisex when they advertise it. And I think it would fit probably anybody. And it's got little magnets all the way around it and little dividing section. So you can put your little, whatever you're using, put your little bits on there so you don't lose them. And I even put my different drill bits on there on my little electric screwdrivers. Because a lot of times I've got to switch out between the flat and the Phillips and it's just a great way to store it.

Kevin: Hmm. So it's a wrist magnet. Okay. Magnetic wristband. Got it.

Wendy: Yeah. Yeah.

Mark: That's great. So everything just sticks on there. I really like that.

Wendy: Yeah. Yeah. It's super handy. You know, when you're putting up a ceiling fan especially, you usually have to be holding it up with one hand and then trying to put a screw in something and screw it in with the other hand and it really helps to have the stuff at your fingertips.

Kevin: You just gave me an idea. I work with a little workshop apron and I wonder if I could put a magnet inside the apron so that I could just stick it against the apron.

Wendy: Oh yeah. That's a great idea.

Kevin: Yeah. Thank you for your idea.

Wendy: You bet.

Mark: That's cool. Yeah. So, excellent for ladders. And that's a good one. Okay. So let's go to your next one. This is something else that is a phone kind of attachment it sounds like.

Wendy: Yeah. So I know there's a lot of people like me who like pop sockets so that you can rest your phone in your hand pretty easily and reach the front of your phone with your

thumb. And I love it. I think they're great. But I also find myself wanting to have my phone mounted in the car and I've tried a bunch of different kind of mounting systems and some are good. Some aren't so good. Sometimes they ruin your dash a little bit or leave a sticky substance on there. And I saw one that was a MagSafe magnetic phone mount for your car. And I have a MagSafe phone and a case as well. And I thought, Oh, that'd be easy. But I like my pop socket. So I decided to give up my pop socket.

Wendy: And then I was at target and I saw this pop socket that's usable with a MagSafe case. And it's just like a regular pop socket, but it has like an oval back to it. And that oval back fits right on your MagSafe magnet. And it's a tight, strong fit. You can't shake your phone off it. It's tight. And then you use it as you want to use it. I use it during the day. And then when I get in the car, I just slide it off really easily. Just pry it off and I can stick my phone on the mount in the car.

Mark: That is cool.

Kevin: So the pop socket is magnetized to the... Instead of being... How do they normally attach? By glue?

Wendy: Sticky stuff.

Kevin: Sticky stuff. Okay. So it's a magnetic version of the pop socket. Okay.

Wendy: Exactly. So you can take it on and off. And I know with pop sockets, you can take them on and off. I've done that, but it's going to be a limited amount of time you can do that.

Kevin: Right, right.

Wendy: And it's tough. But yeah, you can throw this thing in your purse or wherever, and it's not going to stick to anything because it's just the magnet. So I'm finding it to be super handy.

Mark: So the pop socket idea is it's like this little telescoping kind of knob on the back of your phone and it goes between two of your fingers so that you have more control of your phone and won't fall. What's the main reason that people like pop sockets?

Wendy: Yeah. So I play games on my phone a lot. I play some word games with competitions and it's an easy way to hold it up. It's because it just kind of rests on your finger on the one hand. The other thing it's good for, when I take walks there's a lot of times I want to Snapchat something to my kids or back home and you can open it with one finger and do your Snapchat with one hand while you're holding the dogs with the other hand. Or your camera too, you could do that. Open your camera and take pictures with just one hand.

Kevin: So it makes it easier to handle with just one hand.

Wendy: Yeah. Yeah. And you can use pop sockets as kickstands. So if you have your phone sideways, you can lean it on the counter if you want to watch something.

Mark: Watching a video or something like that.

Kevin: Okay. That's cool.

Mark: That sounds good. And what about like sticking them in your pocket with that pop socket? That's the thing that like, I don't like things that kind of like catch.

Wendy: That stick out. So the pop sockets and this is not just exclusive to this MagSafe version, but they always are telescoping so you can push them in and you can pull them out. So they're relatively flat to put into your pocket. They could catch on like a seam or the edge of your pocket if it's facing the wrong way, which I don't love, but I sort of put up with. But they lie fairly flat once they're pushed in.

Mark: Okay. Yeah. I just have not gotten into that pop socket camp yet.

Kevin: I mean, I like the idea of having one that's magnetic so you can kind of try it or if you know you're going to be needing it, you can add it on rather than always having it on. That's that's sort of interesting.

Mark: Yeah.

Wendy: Yeah.

Mark: That is. Okay. So we've got a couple other tools. Let's see. So this is the Revlon One-Step Hair Dryer and Volumizer. So tell us about this one.

Kevin: Yeah. I need a little bit of volumizing.

Wendy: Okay.

Mark: Yeah, Kevin, you really... You've got to get your hair under control, Kevin.

Wendy: I knew you guys would be excited about this one. So this is a hot tool for your hair that can be used two ways. One is to dry your hair and you can use it to overall just dry your whole hair. If you're the kind of person who does like a blowout style, which is that you use a hair dryer and a brush with, which is a two-handed process, not a big deal if you're used to it, but you know, if you're not used to it probably as a big deal. So you can use it for that, which I do and it does give you some volume because you can lift at your roots, which is great.

Wendy: But the thing I really am finding I use it for more often is touch-ups. So if I'm washing my hair every two to three days, on the off days I wake up and it's a little crazy. Instead of

flat ironing it and getting it stick straight, I can use this, I can get a little curl into it. I can re-volumize I can make the whole thing look like it's a fresh hairdo. A fresh blowout.

Kevin: So how does the volumizing work? And I presume the volumizing means that kind of like there's space between the hairs that... I'm trying to visualize this.

Wendy: Yeah, I think so. I think... So my hair is curly and so I can get volume, and probably most people can do this unless your hair is very silky stick straight. But if you dry your roots directed out from your or scalp, you're going to get some volume because it's just going to lay more fluffy. You're going to have a little bit of dimension to it.

Kevin: Dimension to the hair?

Wendy: Yeah.

Kevin: The hair becomes more wiggly and therefore that creates the added volume so it's not as straight?

Wendy: It's more that it's not lying flat against your scalp. It's got a little lift coming out of your scalp instead of just flat down against it. So then you're going to have just that little bit of volume at your roots, which gives you an overall look of having more hair, a little thicker hair.

Mark: That makes sense to me. So if it's sticking up perpendicular to the surface of your scalp, it's going to kind of like give it the appearance of more volume.

Kevin: That's your hair style, Mark, right?

Mark: Yeah, exactly.

Kevin: Straight up.

Mark: Yes. That works. When it's flat down, I am practically bald.

Kevin: So how do you get volume?

Mark: I get it from using a little bit of gel and just a little bit after I take a shower wash my hair, I just put a little gel, like very small amount, like a pea sized amount and just rub it in and that's all it takes. It kind of just naturally will do that and this just helps.

Speaker 4: So this device, the volumizing part of it. Is that just you say... I understand like you can have a hair dryer, so there's some heat and there's some wind, I guess. Does this device... It looks it's like a circular comb, I guess I would say. Does it spin around?

Wendy: So it doesn't spin around it's almost like you took a hair dryer and straightened it out. So it was just like a line and at the end you glued a brush on it and you just, you hold it with one hand and with your other hand you can section your hair and do the styling part.

But it blows air out between the bristles of the brush. And you can put it on, I think there's low and high settings.

Kevin: Right. So it's kind of like you're forcing the hair dryer through a brush.

Wendy: Exactly.

Kevin: The tines of a brush. Okay.

Wendy: Yeah. That's exactly what it is, yeah. And it heats up really fast. I can just keep it in my drawer by my sink and just do a quick touch-up. It's actually quicker than waiting for a flat iron to heat up and then using it. And I think it's more versatile.

Kevin: Cool.

Mark: That sounds good.

Kevin: And this is a Revlon one that you mentioned. Are there other makes and is this one particularly better or was this the first or do you have any preference really?

Wendy: You know, I have not tried other ones. The reason I have this one is because my daughter recommended it and we went to Target and this is what Target had. So this is the one I got, but she's got long hair and it's kind of tough to deal with and she thought it was great. So her recommendation carried a lot of weight with me. And it's pretty inexpensive.

Kevin: Yeah. It's like \$35.

Wendy: Yeah. Yeah.

Mark: That sounds good.

Wendy: Yeah.

Kevin: Okay.

Mark: So thanks for those tool picks. What I wanted to talk about for a little while is you have a really fun Instagram channel that was called The Quarantini where you would make a different kind of cocktail every day during the pandemic. But hopefully we're kind of at the tail end of this pandemic and you changed the name. We'll have a link to, I think it's called oh_happy_hour. Is that what it's called?

Wendy: Yeah. Yeah. The Quarantini didn't fit anymore.

Mark: Exactly. The thing that I like about it is that not only do you have like a unique recipe, but the photography is really nice too. You always take care to like have a cool glass, the

lighting, the little accoutrements and garnishes that go along with it. How do you come up with these recipes? Like a new one almost every day.

Wendy: I know it's kind of crazy. I have not repeated and I should check, I'm not sure how many posts I have now. But I love the creative part of making cocktails. I love the picking just the right glass and picking something to put on the rim that's really going to compliment it by color or flavor. I love cocktail pics. I love serving people cocktails because it's always such a fun, happy time. That's when you're having a cocktail, you're getting together with people or it's, you're anticipating a good meal or something fun. So I'm very drawn to them. I love the colors too. I love the different kind of flavors.

Wendy: So sometimes I would pick a theme for my week and I would do some research and try to follow that theme. And one that I really liked was women in cocktails. And I did a lot of research on early bartenders and women who were bootleggers. And I would try to look up what their favorite drink was or if they were bootleggers of scotch I'd come up with a scotch drink, or I would look one up. So a lot of them are recipes I've looked up and some of them are just ideas I've had as I'm drinking and I think, Oh my gosh, I could make a margarita but use rum instead. And let's just see what happens when I do that. So just kind of a combination of different things. Sometimes people give me ideas too.

Mark: And sometimes you do like a mocktail too if you wanted to just do... Like it doesn't always have to have alcohol.

Wendy: Yeah. It doesn't always have to have alcohol for sure. There's a lot of fun mocktails, which I'm probably going to explore a little bit more too. I think those are a great idea. And I follow some cocktail websites and one thing I notice that I really like about the websites and some of the Instagram accounts is that they'll put the recipes in. Because sometimes you see a really cool cocktail that somebody posts and it's blue and it's got smoke coming out of it. And you know, it's got some pineapple spear and you're like, Oh God, I really got to make that. That looks amazing. And they just give you the name and that's it. And you're like, Oh man. And you know, I'm definitely a home cocktail person. So I do have a pretty well stocked bar, but I don't have odd liquors and I don't have a smoker.

Kevin: You don't have liquid nitrogen?

Wendy: I don't have liquid nitrogen. I don't have any of that fun stuff. So I try to make what I post accessible to people who want to do it in their own home too.

Kevin: And you do list the recipe.

Wendy: I do list the recipe. Yeah. And every once in a while I'll guess, because sometimes I'll put up a picture of a cocktail I've had in a restaurant or bar and I'll say, "This is what the menu said it had. I don't know the proportions. I'm guessing, but give it a shot. It was amazing."

Kevin: Besides the fact that cocktails usually have alcohol is there anything else that would be the definition of it? I mean like, do they ever have like bubbly stuff in them or does that sort of not make them a cocktail anymore?

Wendy: You know, I'm definitely not the expert and I don't know the history very well, so I can't tell you honestly. But in my mind, a cocktail's anything you'd want to sit down and sip with a friend. So it could be in a variety of situations and atmospheres and ambiances, but what do you think would be fun to share with a friend? So I don't care what goes in it. I'm not going to be picky about that. And I like an interesting cocktail that you can say like, Oh yeah you put that lavender syrup that you made in there and I can just barely taste it, but it really adds something. That kind of talk to me is really fun.

Mark: I really like that one that you did called The Cure. That was one of my favorites.

Wendy: Yeah, that was right as the vaccine was coming at. And you know, I think everybody had had it at that point with being inside your house and stuff. And we were like, Oh my God, this is going to save us all. So let's celebrate with a cocktail, how fun. And we made a cocktail that you shot the final shot of liquor in with a syringe. And it got some attention. It was pretty fun.

Mark: Yeah. It looks cool. And the stuff in the syringe was like kind of a vibrant blue color too. What was that?

Wendy: If it was vibrant blue it was one of two things. It was either blue Curacao or I do cocktails with... I make tea with butterfly pea flower, which is a dried herb that you can get on Amazon. And it brews a tea which is almost tasteless, but it's a indigo blue. It's beautiful. And if you add it to a drink that has citric acid in it of any kind, it changes the color, the color won't be blue anymore. It'll be a pink. So I've fooled around a little bit. It's really fun to make a drink that's like a lemony-based drink and then you do a pour over with that indigo syrup into it. And the whole thing, it looks like a chemistry experiment.

Mark: There's a color change. That's cool.

Wendy: Which is always fun.

Kevin: Yes.

Mark: Yeah. Have you ever thought about doing like a YouTube channel where you kind of show how to create them or would that just add extra work?

Wendy: You know, I haven't really thought about that. Hmm. I don't feel like I'm a YouTube person, but...

Mark: Yeah.

Kevin: You don't have to show yourself. It can just be your hands.

Mark: Yeah.

Wendy: Yeah. I'd probably be more interested in that. Yeah, yeah. Possibility.

Mark: Yeah. All right, Wendy. Well, this was really fun hearing about your tools and all the stuff that you do. I really appreciate you taking the time to chat with us.

Kevin: Yes. It was really great to have you on again and to hear your latest sets of cool tool picks. Thank you for joining us.

Wendy: Oh, you bet. Thank you for having me. Appreciate it.

Mark: Hey everybody. It's your host, Mark, and I wanted to thank you for listening to the Cool Tools show. And I also wanted to let you know that we've got a lot more going on at Cool Tools than just this podcast. We also have the Cool Tools website, which has a new tool review every day. And you can get there by going to cool-tools.org. We also have four different newsletters that you can subscribe to and you can subscribe to those from the Cool Tools page. We have this podcast that you're listening to right now. We also have a YouTube channel where we review tools. Check that YouTube channel by going to youtube.com/cooltools.

Mark: And one of the things I'd like to ask you is if you are really enjoying everything that we are producing, go to our Patreon page and support us there. You can sign up and give us as little as \$1 a month. And that would mean a lot to us. The money that we get for and Patreon goes towards a lot of things. We transcribe our podcast interviews so that you can read them online. We pay for editing of our podcasts and for our videos. We pay our contributors. We have video production costs. We have equipment costs. We have hosting costs and the money you give us through Patreon also goes to support Cool Tools lab. Anything you give is a huge help. And one of the things that we do is if you are a contributor to Patreon, we'll give you a shout out on air.

Mark: And so I have a few people here to thank this week, Mark Leonage, Micah Gates, Monty Zukowski, Patrick James McNally, Robert Cohen, Scott, Spence Lloyd, Steve Avery, Steve Golden, Steve Levine, Tom Hess, William Phillips, Aaron Nipper, Derab Patel, Glen Mercer, Jay Walker, Jeff Bonair, Ryan Jerell, Pat Daley, Patrick Kennedy, Troy Wallot, Mike Camarate, Nicole Harkin, Tim Usef, Scott Reed. Thanks all of you for supporting Cool Tools. And if you would like to have a shout out, go over to the Patreon page and sign up and thanks for listening to the Cool Tools podcast. We'll see you next week.