

When your suitcase tumbles down the luggage chute first after a long flight

My friends have theories.

“If you’re the first person to check in for the flight you’re pretty much done for,” my friend Chad will begin as our plane begins its slow descent. “Your suitcase is first in the plane and gets buried under everyone else’s golf clubs, guitar cases, and bird cages.”

“No, no, no, it’s not like that at all,” Mike will counter, sipping his diet cola and shaking his head slowly. “If you’re last to check in, you’re last one out. Fair is fair. Unless you’re in first class or have a special membership tag, they observe the rules of **suitcase etiquette**. These are big companies. They have standards.”

“You’re both wrong,” I’ll sigh with the pompous air of a frustrated airline CEO. “I wish there was a science to it, but honestly the system’s in shambles. Look, if you were tossing backbreaking luggage in the **bowels** of an airport all day, do you think you’d follow the rules of ‘suitcase etiquette’? No, you just grab bags randomly. It’s all completely random. Nobody knows what’s coming out.”

The conversation reaching a stalemate, we all shrug and look away from one another. Mike glances out the window at the bright lights below and Chad flips passively through an in-flight magazine article about **resort swimming pools with interesting shapes**.

Tired and sore, we land, clear customs, and make our way to the luggage belt. Away from the theories and debate, one thing becomes extremely clear: It sure feels great when your suitcase tumbles down the luggage chute first.

If this happens, part the **anxious crowd**, grab your bag, and shuffle outside to get on your way. Smile a big smile because you just won the suitcase jackpot.

AWESOME!

When your sneeze stalls for a second and then suddenly comes boooming out

Your head is a machine.

Honestly, just face it: Your face and scalp are really just oily gift wrap over the giant, whirring **Skull Factory** running full throttle inside your coconut. Just think about what's going on up there.

First you've got sound waves constantly navigating your twisty, waxy ear canals like **Luke Skywalker** weaving through Death Star trenches. Then there's your nose on permanent high-sniff alert, searching out gas leaks in the basement, fresh croissants at the bakery, or **coffee aisles in the grocery store**. And we can't forget your mouth and nose forever dancing together in the majestic art of breathing.

But wait, that's not all. On top of these rickety assembly lines of important Head Business, you've got blood swirling around, mucus dripping all over the place, and neurons firing and bouncing off walls like a million never-ending games of **Pong**.

Skull Factory's a busy place, folks. The line keeps moving every day, every night, every year, forever.

Given how much is going on, it's no wonder the **gears** get

gummed up once in a while. Rogue lashes jam your sockets, Popsicles give you brain freeze, and sneezes stall in your clogged-up noggin just as they're trying to escape.

And you know what that feels like.

Face frozen in an **awkward crunch**, you stare at the ceiling and hold your hand up to your friend, silently pleading with the factory foreman to please, please just let it out. One eye popped open, the other squeezed shut, you clench your cheeks, bend your mouth into a triangle, and feel the lost sneeze pinball around your skull.

And then **BOOOOOM!**

Oh mama, how good does it feel when that sneeze finally comes screaming out?

Really, that sweet release is like someone yanking a red-hot, twisted wrench out of your grinding, crunched-up head-gears and letting all the oily parts start quietly purring again.

AWESOME!

Frozen walls of air conditioning hitting you on hot days

Sometimes after a day of walking around in blistering summer heat, I come down with a bad case of **Gross Face**. People, I'm not proud of it, but on those steamy days a nasty combination of shiny forehead sweat, downtown street air, and dried-up sunblock gives me a mask I can't shake. Yes, my otherwise flawless, milky-smooth complexion gets slathered with the drips, and suddenly I'm cruising around town with pit stains and a T-shirt sweat-glued to my back.

If you been there, you know it's a sticky, sweaty slog. But there is good news.

Invisible, frozen walls of cranked air conditioning exist just beyond the front door of the nearest coffee shop, post office, or **convenience store**. Just pop in to experience a frigid slap of ice-cold air right in the kisser.

When you find these hidden gems of subzero bliss, it's like momentarily trading your slimy sweat mask for a new face. Glistening, wet necks get an ice-cold sponge down, stinging eyelids freeze to ice, and your disgusting hot-baked face gives a relaxing smile as it's shotgun-blasted with a chilly round of

AWESOME!

Catching somebody singing in their car and sharing a laugh with them

It's late, it's quiet, and you're stuck at a red light.

Casually, you glance to your left and notice a muted explosion of furious head bopping, furrowed eyebrows, and silent wailing inside, as the driver rocks out alone and in the zone.

And there's just something worth smiling about when you observe that passionate display of **pure private pleasure** only a few feet away. Suddenly you're the producer in the booth watching your struggling artist hit the high notes in their tight **sound chamber on wheels**. Yes, they've tried for years to get clean and make it off the streets, but now you're finally smelling a hit . . .

. . . and a future.

So maybe you bop along for a few beats, catch the same song on your radio, or lock eyes with them for a second and share a warm and heartfelt laugh. Maybe you feel a tiny flip in your heart as you connect with a total stranger for a few fleeting seconds. And maybe it makes you a tiny bit happier and maybe you smile a tiny bit more.

The moment at a restaurant
after you see your food
coming from the kitchen but
before it lands on your table

Somebody shushes, conversation hushes, and all eyes flicker
with delight as you watch your sizzling, glistening meals
cruise out of the kitchen and slowly descend in front of
you.

AWSOME!

Terrible businesses run by children

When I was about fourteen years old, I signed up for something called Junior Achievement. It was a happy-go-lucky nonprofit group that promoted business and entrepreneurship skills in children. Or basically, it was a bunch of kids in a room every Thursday night acting like **middle managers** with adult supervision.

My group came up with a business called Roc Creations. This was a clever play on our core product: cheap, homemade rock necklaces. We thought it was a brilliant, failsafe plan. After all, who likes necklaces? Everybody, of course. And how cheap are rocks? Pretty darn cheap, man. We spent one Thursday at the beach, the next one painting, and a final Thursday drilling holes and tying string through them. We figured it was a solid plan, well executed.

Sadly, after a few weeks we realized we'd made a huge mistake. We bet all our chips on a losing hand. The necklaces failed to generate enough buzz and excitement at the flea markets, despite our screaming rhyming chants at terrified housewives, and we quickly tumbled into the red, piles of dead inventory and drill bit invoices mocking our poor judgment.

Sneaking under someone else's umbrella

Okay, who's the smart one who brought an umbrella? Because I know it's not me.

No, when the sky cracks up and the rain smacks down, I'm the one wearing heavy jeans and a thick, spongy sweater that soaks up everything and turns me into a swampy slab of **peat bog**. I'm drenched, I'm dripping, I'm ice-chilled to the bone.

But that's what makes it so great when it starts coming down and out pops a giant umbrella from a friend who offers to gimme shelter for a few minutes. Yes, if your special someone is packing some **giant nylon heat**, then I think it's fair to say you're smiling high, your clothes are dry, and you're rockin' the streets under a tiny little patch of

AWESOME!

Finally remembering a word that's been on the tip of your tongue for so long

It's like throwing a pail of cold water on all your smoking inner head parts. Gears unjam, lines start rolling, and you settle back in the restaurant booth with a satisfied smile on your face and just blurt it out.

"Parchesi, that's what it was called."

AWESOME!

The sound of scissors cutting construction paper



When you hear scissors cutting through a sheet of construction paper, you just know fun is about to happen. The table is covered with glue sticks, glitter, pipe cleaners, and **googly eyes**, and everything is set

for a day full of crafts with the camp counselor.

In some ways, this is essentially the kid equivalent of spreading tools out across the **basement workbench** before building a shelf, or taping windows and opening paint cans before you coat the kitchen walls in a new shade.

Yes, the sound of scissors cutting construction paper is the sound of important work about to happen. It's the sound of creativity bubbling. It's the sound of ideas blossoming. And it's the sound of some decent fun on a rainy afternoon.
AWESOME!

Waking up before your alarm clock and realizing you've got lots of sleep time left

Dark windows, **dead silence**, dim moonlight dancing on the walls. The night is calm and quiet and peaceful.

And then **BOOM**.

Your eyes burst open and you bust out of bed in an adrenaline-gushing, brain-rushing state of emergency. Dizzy and blind, you **urgently stumble** over to the clock as thoughts zoom through your head—am I late for work, did I miss the buzzer, do I have time for a shower?

You swipe the clock, zoom it up to your **squinty eyeballs**, and get a good look.

“4:56 a.m.” it screams in its trademark bright-red fluorescent silence.

“**4:56 a.m.**”

Your hazy half-asleep brain slowly clicks into gear. “Much early than morning,” you piece together slowly. “Time more sleep now.”

And then a slow, thin smile curls on your lips as you turn to stare at your **crumpled cocoon** and dive back into **Bedhead Paradise**. Oh, you know that second dip into Dreamland will be a doozy for a few big reasons: