
BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

The English We Speak

Feel seen



This is not a word-for-word transcript.

Feifei

Hello and welcome to The English We Speak, where we explain phrases used by fluent English speakers so that you can use them as well. I'm Feifei, and I'm here with Beth. How are you doing?

Beth

Hi Feifei. I'm great, thanks! I actually went to see a comedian last night, and she was talking about having a really long coffee order and feeling awkward about it. I felt so seen – I have a really long coffee order!

Feifei

Oh, really? Now I want to know your coffee order...

Beth

OK. Are you ready? It's a soya milk sugar-free caramel flat white with two shots of decaf.

Feifei

Wow. That is long. So, the comedian wasn't talking about you specifically, but you 'felt seen' – that means you felt understood. The comedian was talking about an experience you can relate to.

Beth

Yes. If you 'feel seen' you feel represented, and it can be used in a jokey way, like with my coffee order, but it can also be used more seriously, like when people see themselves represented in a book or film, for example.

Feifei

Yes. A lot of this is about inclusion. I was listening to the radio this morning, and one of the presenters said that she has two young children at home, and every morning she has to, you know, get them up, get them dressed, so she feels like

she has lived a hundred lives before she even leaves her front door. And I felt really seen.

Beth

Yeah, I can imagine. One of my friends is in a wheelchair, and when she sees someone on TV that is in a wheelchair, she says that it really makes her feel seen. So again, it's an experience that she can relate to.

Feifei

It's about feeling included. Let's hear some more examples of 'feel seen'.

Examples

So, I'm a bit weird, and I put orange juice on my cereal. And when my friend said that she did the same thing, I felt so seen.

I think it's great when you're watching TV, and you see somewhere that looks like where you live. I mean, it helps you feel seen.

My friend's been feeling really anxious lately, but she's listening to a new podcast, and she feels really seen. They talk about the same things that she's going through.

Beth

We mentioned before that 'feeling seen' is often related to inclusion. 'Feeling seen' means being represented and having your own thoughts, feelings or situation validated and recognised by someone else.

Feifei

Yes. It's about sharing experiences and feelings. We can say 'I feel seen' about a situation or experience that isn't always talked about. It's something different or unusual.

Beth

So, 'feeling seen' can mean that you feel validated in a way that feels quite personal.

Feifei

Exactly. Is it time to order a coffee? Let's go. We'll be back next time with another useful English phrase. See you soon!

Beth

Bye!

