



# slack

# VARIETY PACK

Episode 3: Sensory Overload Pack

Female: You are listening to the Slack ...

Male: Variety Pack.

Female: A collection of stories about work ...

Male: Life and everything in between.

Female: Brought to you by Slack. If you don't know what Slack is, head over to [slack.com](http://slack.com) and change your working life forever. On this episode, the band OK Go has a new way to store their music.

Male: I can't tell you how much stuff I recorded in college that I'll never be able to listen to again.

Female: What not to microwave in the office kitchen.

Male: The smelliest, stinkiest, most feted food that permeates the entire office.

Female: Learning to love your notifications.

Male: Makes me feel uncomfortable.

Female: First, meet a group of guys who hang out in the office with no pants.

Male: Slack Variety Pack, yeah, cool.

Male: Okay.

Female: Making work less worky.

Male: Meet a very special group of guys.

Matt: My name is Matt Thompson.

Tee: Hi. My name is Tee.

Chris: My name is Chris Misoni.

Yod: My name is Yod Sylvester.

Male: They are members of a unique sub-culture.

Ted: My name is Ted Shred.

Mack: I'm Mack Bridal.

Jason: My name is Jason Leiburt.

Cal: I'm Cal Henderson, the CTO of Slack.

Male: Come rain, wind, sleet and snow, these are the guys who wear shorts to the office every single day of the year.

Male: I wear shorts all weather, so I wear winter, summer, fall.

Male: I will wear shorts all year round.

Male: Doesn't have to be above zero.

Male: I'll wear shorts when pipes are freezing.

Male: They have freed themselves from the tyranny of pants.

Male: I've worn pants once in 3 years.

Male: When you get older and wiser you realize, "Oh, you can make your own rules," so I started realizing, "Well, nobody says they have to wear pants."

Male: I'm not going to be able to say that wearing pants makes me feel claustrophobic, but it's trending that way.

Male: Today, they stand together as loyal members of a unique band of brothers.

Male: It's all that's become part of my identity.

Male: You know Rob, he's the guy with the shorts.

Male: All my friends know me as the guy wearing shorts.

Male: I've actually had to stop to help at a vehicle accident one time. The police asked me if I was okay because they're wondering what I was doing out there like in the middle of the field with a rollover car and I'm standing there in shorts trying to block the wind for this woman so that she wasn't getting frostbite.

Male: They came to be office shorts guys for all different reasons. From nature ...

Male: I run hot. I mean, I tend to be hot all the time.

Male: I haven't meet with thermostat, which is always set at high.

Male: To nurture.

Male: When I was a kid, my mom, she made me a pair of shorts from my old Star Wars sheets that I had from being a kid in the '70s. I don't know that anything will ever be as awesome as those Star Wars shorts.

Male: I went to boarding school and that's where it all started. You wore shorts as your uniform, so you're freezing all the time.

Male: They have sacrificed their love life.

Male: If there could be women out there who take shorts guys, magical, and when you go out on date, we have to find the right shorts to wear.

Male: My wife get used to it. I think she's resigned to it at this point.

Male: Let's say ex-girlfriend, for one thing she was always trying to get me to wear pants whenever we're going to some place. She didn't want to see me when I was in my shorts.

Male: They know you think they're weird.

Male: On Halloween last year, everybody dressed as me. Everybody in the company wore shorts and they called it Calloween. Some people who dressed up as me then liked my outfit so much that they started wearing shorts in the office on regular days.

Male: When I was standing at the bank teller, one of the other guys on the front and was sitting there. He said, "Oh, Rob, I didn't recognize you with your pants on," because for some reason, I have pants on that day. I have no idea why. The whole bank just went dead quiet.

Male: They don't care what you think.

Male: I mean, I don't even know why we're really having this conversation. What is the problem? They're just pants with no legs.

Male: Women wear skirts. They wear skirts in the middle of freaking winter and they wear nylons. How warm can they be? That's wearing shorts.

Male: Next time you see your office shorts guys strolling during a snowstorm, thank him for taking it to the map.

Male: I don't give a damn whether somebody else says I should be wearing this or wearing that. I'm just going to be who I am and feel comfortable with what I'm wearing.

Male: Office shorts guys, we love you.

Male: Keep on wearing shorts and fight the power.

Female: InVision Channel.

Damian: My name is Damian Kulash, and I'm a singer in the band OK Go, and I direct their videos. Our first CD Album, Hungry Ghosts, came out in October on vinyl and CD and, of course, every downloadable version, imaginable. Soon it will also be coming out on strands of DNA. We are working on a science project to encode the whole album in the A, C, T and G nucleotides of DNA.

Female: Whoa, hold on there, OK Go. You're doing what now with DNA? Let's get a bit of context here. Meet Dr. Robert Grass, a Chemical Engineer at ETH Zurich, who specializes in storing information in DNA.

Robert: DNAs are long molecule that we all have in our body in every cell and our idea is to use this chemical stride format to store each information. First, what we need is a copy of the library. Until what we develop either codes which comes late they'll see when it lands to the four-based possibility as we have indeed. That file has been given to DNA synthesizer. Next step is to encase those DNA molecules into a glass matrix to give it a high stability down in DNA just passing solution. The product you get from that is a white powder, looks extremely boring with just a ... Looks like a piece of duck.

Female: Turns out that tiny spec of dust packs a big wallop. Here's why DNA is such a great storage medium.

Robert: DNA, in the [big product 00:06:30] sample are easily known relatively cold play outside or underground temperatures are between 5 and 10 degree centigrade. We can get certainly 10,000 years of data storage.

Male: It will never be obsolete as long as DNA is a mode of storing data for life form, there will be a reason for us to care about it. I can't tell you how

much stuff I recorded in college that I'll never be able to listen to again because I don't have a jazz driver, driver, floppy disk drive anymore.

Male: It is incredible space sufficient.

Robert: The numbers you'll get at least theoretical numbers are enormous. It's 400 million terabytes in the ground of DNA going about a teaspoonful of DNA who can store, I think, the whole internet traffic from the world of one year.

Male: A vial of water about the size of my thumb, let's say, there will be over several trillion copies of our album. Imagine how many several trillion CDs would take up.

Female: Music, PDF files, any kind of digital information can be stored on DNA. But how do you get it off so that it's usable again? It's not an easy process. Dr. Grass explains.

Robert: Cool. This whole system to get it work is that we can get DNA out of the glass without destroying the DNA, so we [inaudible 00:07:58] keeps off the glass. We do it by fluoride chemistry. You get the DNA back into a solution. Then we use something that's known as DNA sequencing. You attach it to a surface. Then by rather complicated process, you read the sequence of the DNA molecules one base at a time.

Female: What would motivate artist like OK Go to take on a science experiment? It's all about turning your head a little off kilter.

Male: A lot of the creative projects we do, whether it's working in the studio with the producer or working on a video with a film maker, a dancer, a technician, or a technologist, a lot of what we're doing is finding people who are really good at what they do and ask them to look at it side ways and come out what they're doing from a different direction.

The [inaudible 00:08:59] engineer, instead of thinking about how well something works, think about how beautiful it works. Or instead of thinking about how reliably it works, think about how precariously you can make it work. Or if you're a dog trainer not thinking about what the craziest tricks you can do is but what tricks you can do over the course of 3 minutes. Or if you're a dancer think not about what it looks like from the side but from below. I think that that lateral thinking tends to be what makes interesting breakthroughs in terms of creativity but also in terms of science or math or really anything. Sometimes artistic gestures are the beginning of something much more interesting.

Female: Back in the middle ages, monks spent their whole lives copying books for the greater good in order to maintain and transmit knowledge. In our modern world, information is everywhere. Yet, knowledge is much shorter lived. Here are Dr. Robert Grass's and Damian Kulash's picks for knowledge worth saving on DNA for generations to come.

Robert: I'd say a nice example. Wikipedia, it changes every millisecond. Take a snapshot of Wikipedia and store it for the future. So in the future people could say, "Oh, in 2015, that's what people thought about the U.S., about the president, about the pop star."

Male: Boy, my top 3 things that I would store if I could in DNA, the Library of Congress because it is so dated denched that you could take ... the entirety of the Library of Congress would fit in a tiny, tiny space. That's a lot of human knowledge right there. Maybe like Google servers. Let me see, the third thing I would store, maybe like a really, really good pizza recipe.

Female: Check out Dr. Robert Grass's work on DNA storage at ETH Zurich and if you're interested in getting OK Go's album, Hungry Ghosts, on a stranded DNA, Tweet them at OK Go.

Slack, remember to get up and stretch once in a while.

Male and Female: Join us.

Male: The ideas festival.

Female: The creative exchange.

Male: The conference conference.

Female: Name tags.

Male: Lanyards.

Female: Slideshows.

Male: Thick-framed glasses.

Female: Raw, canvas tote bags.

Male: iPhones.

Female: Dress shoes with funky laces.

Male: Moleskine, moleskine, moleskines, is that how you pronounce that?

Female: Sitting down.

Male: Nodding.

Female: Trying not to play with your phone.

Male: A DJ set at 11 in the morning.

Female: Branding.

Male: Twitter.

Female: Community.

Male: The community mix.

Female: Remember to use our hashtag.

Male: A new way of thinking.

Female: A new way of working.

Male and Female: An old way of twerking.

Male: I heard last year they serve sliders.

Female: Abstract concepts.

Male: Amorphous ideas.

Female: Things that will frustrate you and make you say, "How is that a thing?"

Male: Slow-motion video.

Female: The drama of sitting still.

Male: Moms with blogs.

Female: Hands-free meetup.



Male: A selfie lounge.

Female: Cupcakes for some reason.

Male: Sans Serif fonts.

Female: Fonts are actually just a software. I think you're talking about type phases.

Male: Oh, spare me.

Female: Let's take another opportunity to thank our sponsors.

Male: Do you know if they'll be serving sliders again? Sliders like tiny little hamburgers?

Female: The future ...

Male and Female: ... Of our industry.

Male: This is where we live.

Female: This is how we work.

Male: Different.

Female: Similar.

Male: Old things.

Female: New things.

Male and Female: Things.

Female: Sustainability.

Male: Well-known.

Female: Design.

Male: Buzz words.

Female: Mood boards.

Male: Boardwalks.

Female: More boards.

Male: Collaboration.

Female: Creativity.

Male: Inspiration.

Female: Consultation.

Male: Thinking thoughts.

Female: The urban thinking festival.

Male: You might run into your old boss and it'll be weird.

Female: With speeches by.

Male: Iconoclasts.

Female: Vanguards.

Male: Visionaries.

Female: Thought leaders.

Male: Paradigm shifters.

Female: Bald nerds with glasses.

Male: Hopefully some kind of slider chef.

Female: Enough, okay?

Male: A guy who doesn't normally wear a blazer but is totally pulling it off.

Male and Female: The Metropolitan Conference Festival.

Male: It's right off.

Female: Channel change, history of work.

Female: Summer's here, nearly. That got us thinking about vacations. Where did they come from? 6,000 years ago or so, depending on your biblical calculations, God created the world in 6 days, then took a day off. For a lot of us, that was the way it works. To figure out how we got from there to here, we track down this guy.

Al: Hello. Hi, my name is Al Gini. I'm professor of Business Ethics at the Quinlan School of Business in Chicago, Illinois. Of course, the phone goes off. We're going to control this. Don't worry.

Female: Professor, philosopher, and author of *The Importance of Being Lazy*, a book praising the virtues of downtime.

Male: Not only is the word vacation a recent origin, the notion of weekend is a recent origin. 300 years ago, a weekend on a farm was another day, not Saturday or Sunday. It may have been broken up especially if you're a part of a religious group that Sunday was the day of the Lord, so therefore, you went to church. That may be the only reason you didn't work the farm.

Female: We also called up Cindy Aron, Professor of History at the University of Virginia, an author of *Working at Play*, a history of vacations in the United States.

Cindy: Something we all take for granted, vacations, don't even think about it as having a history. I remember say to people working on a book on the history of vacations. They scratched their heads and look at me oddly, "Vacations have a history?" Of course, they do.

Female: For most of 6,000 years, you were lucky if you got 1 day-off a week. Then about 150 years ago, things started to change.

Cindy: Around the middle of the 19th Century, there were doctors who begin to worry that businessmen especially were suffering from what they called brain bag or brain fatigue. It was causing excessive nervous disorders. One of the prescriptions was that these people were spending too much time working. Part of it was too much work, part of it was living in cities where you were bombarded by noise and crowd. What was needed was respite from that, time off from that. Time in the country. Time away from that. Time to let your brain relax.

Female: The new cities popping up across America were causing new stresses, new diseases like brain fatigue and neurasthenia and neurasthenia, neurasthenia.

Cindy: Neurasthenia.

Female: Sure. An antidote is another strange new word heard of for the first time, vacation.

Male: The verb vacation and [foreign language 00:16:38] to be out of, to be away from, to be out of oneself. I love the Italian word [foreign language 00:16:45], to divert oneself, to do something different. My second favorite philosophers Sophia Loren and said [foreign language 00:16:55]. It is sweet to do nothing.

Female: It might be sweet to do nothing, but how is this Mediterranean, [Zuah Davee 00:17:04], going to transplant to 19th Century America? It would take the rise of the middling sorts.

Zuah: In the decades after 1850, the narrative changes because that's when you begin to have a middle class in the United States. Even the word middle class is rarely even even used then and they would have been called the middling sorts. That when you begin to have a class of small businessmen, professionals, petty entrepreneurs who lived in growing numbers of towns or cities and who perhaps for a week or 2 could stop work and go to a vacation abroad.

Part of the 1850s, there were already a route and roads can get you places and then railroad companies begin to realize, "Gee, if that's the end of our railroad, we put a few little boarding houses and we can call it a resort and them more people will ride on our railroad.

Female: Technology-wise, not much changed for the next 100 years. It wasn't until after Word War II that the newest, must-have-tech gadget, the car, combined with the new interstate highways to change vacations once again.

Male: My father bought his second car after World War II, a '53 automobile and we drove around the country. We went from Chicago to the Black Hills; Black Hills to Boise, Idaho; Boise, Idaho to California; California to Texas; Texas to Oaxaca and back to Chicago in 11 days. Then we were so exhausted, we didn't take a vacation for 2 years after that.

Female: Those epic car trips bring us within speeding distance of what we'd recognize as the modern vacation, so whether you're planning across country whole of the summer or just hoping for the odd long weekend, Professor Gini has some final words of advice.

AI: Do we need vacations? Yes. Do we need to have downtime? The answer is yes. Do we need to step away even from the most intriguing project, something that consumes you? The answer is yes. Jackson Pollock in that image. Jackson Pollock standing up on that ladder. It's a ladder and painting, stopping, free the ladder some place else and looking at it again. As Da Vinci said, everyone once in a while you need to step away to think perspective on something so to better understand it and perhaps to enjoy it more.

Female: Office channel.

Male: Every office has one. That one person who blindly and unaware of public workspace will heat up his leftovers in the microwave, but not any old leftovers. The smelliest, stinkiest, most feted, foul and funky food that permeates the entire office, wafting into our nose, clinging to our coats, nesting in our hair and distracting us from doing our jobs.

Female: Popcorn because typically everybody burns popcorn when they put in the microwave.

Male: Any meats.

Female: I've had breast milk before quite a few times.

Female: [Chalmain 00:20:21], it does smell like chalmain.

Male: Certain workplaces have been known to put a ban on things like microwave popcorn and fermented foods who's orders really travel, but this epidemic is far from over. Workers and the millions suffered daily in silence from smelly reheatings.

Male: People aren't created equal when it comes to what they enjoy smelling. I think there are certain things that we can agree on that for the most parts smell delicious like browning foods, roasted meats.

Male: Jacob Burton, a food geek, podcast host and Executive Chef at Stella Culinary in Truckee, California, studies the science of food.

Jacob: They're not smelling it in a setting of a restaurant where everything is fresh, but they're smelling it again in a setting of office where it's been sitting in your Tupperware overnight in the refrigerator, it's had a chance to oxidize a bit, that aroma will definitely permeate the workspace.

- Male: Burton points the 3 main categories of food that are the worst offenders to reheat in public.
- Jacob: Fish is the obvious one. If you bring fish to a workplace to heat up in the microwave, that's just not being very considerate. Your microwave is a very violent cooking medium and the way a microwave works is it sends waves and when those waves hits something that response to mainly water in your food it starts to bounce around those water molecules. You have this volatile molecules that's bouncing around in our fish as it warms and that's a violent myth that's going to throw off more aroma. What you're getting is these oxidized flavors and smells and aromas basically being projected into the air.
- Male: We invaded an office lunch room to conduct a blind smell test of repugnant reheats, starting with fish.
- Female: Are they reheating a fish? Why would you reheat ... That's just gross. It's going to be all rubbery.
- Female: Now, my oatmeal which I put in after will be fishy oatmeal, lovely.
- Male: It's like a punishment when you're a little child and they make a cod liver oil.
- Male: Burton calls the cabbage family the second culinary culprit.
- Jacob: They have a precursor and they have enzymes so as you chop the cabbage, as you cook the cabbage, you're basically creating damage to the cell walls and this was actually discovered and utilized in the World War I. This is where we get mustard gas from because this reaction that happens in cabbage and in mustard greens and in mustard seeds. Brussel sprouts are specifically bad for this sort of thing because not only they have their precursors and these enzymes that will give you the strong pungent aromas that are part and partial to the cabbage family, but they also contain large amounts of sulfur compounds. The more you cook the brussel sprouts especially if you're cooking up incorrectly and the longer they've cooked especially if you take ... You cook them once and you take them to work and, let's say, you reheat them again, as the sulfur compound starts to bring down they give off the same aroma as rotten egg.
- Children: Yuck.
- Male: I think if somebody cleaning their socks in the microwave.

Female: Oh, yeah. It smells like farts or ...

Male: Body odor kind of smell.

Male: It's like that person who sits next to you on the bus.

Female: Yes.

Male: According Chef Jacob, the third microwave food felony is any spicy garlicky dish such as curry.

Jacob: Especially when you're talking like a traditional Indian curry, one of the techniques they often utilized that allows them to get that really good flavor is they cook the spices in fat usually ghee, which is like a clarified brown butter or some form of other oil and that's what gives that really aromatic awesome flavor, but that's also what makes it so aromatic in the office when you go to heat it up the next day.

Female: Yeah, that's one is so strong like I can taste the flavors. Oh yeah, I can like ...

Female: Like the cumin and the turmeric and the lemon.

Female: Yes, I can taste that. It's making me hungry but it is very strong.

Female: It's an appetizing smell for me.

Male: I'm going to be having lunch in my car tomorrow.

Male: I'm not so certain that that lunch has to be hot, so if you're going to heat something up at work because you're really in the mood for something hot, I would go with chicken and rice would be good, be very unoffensive, or some sort of soup.

Male: Hey, why not give a sandwich a shot? Watch the tuna and eggs though or go out for lunch, or if you still insist on invading the air with microwave stink, it is just time to start your own company.

Female: Slack, working better.

Male: Take a moment and think about how many digital notifications you receive in a day. Seriously, really think about it. From your iMessages to your Facebook calendar events, to your life tracking goal setting apps we are all constantly having our attentions zap by a steady stream of dinging

and binging, but what we wanted to know is how do these notifications actually make you feel?

Male: I'm going to play a notification for you and you have to tell me how it makes you feel, okay?

Male: Got it.

Female: Okay.

Male: Ready?

Female: All right.

Female: Excitement.

Female: Excited. That means you got a message.

Female: Anxious, not in a bad way. Just like, oh.

Male: Oh. Yeah, that's annoying. When I hear that and I watch everybody else reach for their phones.

Male: Okay, here's the next one.

Male: It makes me feel uncomfortable. It's got a gutter roll sort of like drop.

Female: I just feel like I dropped something.

Male: Really?

Female: Feel like pick something up, yeah.

Female: Agitated.

Female: I don't like the sound. It's annoying.

Female: It takes me back to my childhood.

Male: Makes me feel like a kid probably because it's a little '80s inspired.

Female: Annoyed because I don't want to talk to my mom right now.



Male: I feel like I need to have a dance party or something to that. I don't know if I could get any work done. Sounds like how I wake up every morning. It's not a good sound.

Female: It's totally aggravating. It's like first thing in the morning, alarm going off and I'm not ready.

Male: We don't want you to leave this notifications party feeling aggravated, so we decided to make this little notification song using nothing but you guessed it notifications. Bonus points for anyone who can guess how many notifications were used.

Female: That wraps up episode 3 of the Slack Variety Pack, a podcast about work, life and everything in between.

Female: Next episode.

Female: A step by step guide to starting your own choir.

Male: Start with a simple song.

Female: The weird science behind knuckle cracking.

Male: It looks like the joint is coming apart.

Female: What it feels like to spend 24 hours on Facebook.

Female: It is currently 6 a.m., my eyes are starting to kill me.

Female: Details.

Female: The stories in this episode are available on [soundcloud.com/slackvarietypack](https://soundcloud.com/slackvarietypack). Share your favorites. Subscribe to the entire series at [itunes.com/slackvarietypack](https://itunes.com/slackvarietypack). Let us know what you think of this episode using the hashtag Slack Variety Pack. Our website is [slack.com/varietypack](https://slack.com/varietypack), and our Twitter handle is @slackhq. If you've got a story idea for the podcast, leave us a voice mail at 415-992-7561. Thank you for listening.

Male: Slack.

Female: Making work less worky.