



American Expression E0189 Cross that bridge when you come to it

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"Cross that bridge when you come to it" is an idiomatic expression that suggests dealing with a particular problem, challenge, or decision at the time it actually arises, rather than worrying about it in advance or attempting to solve it prematurely. The phrase advises against unnecessary concern or speculation about future events and encourages focusing on the present moment instead.

The origin of the expression can be traced back to the literal act of crossing a bridge. When approaching a bridge, it is only necessary to address the obstacles, decisions, or difficulties associated with crossing it when one actually reaches the bridge itself. Attempting to plan or anticipate every possible obstacle before encountering them can lead to unnecessary stress and wasted mental energy.

In a broader sense, "cross that bridge when you come to it" applies to various aspects of life. It acknowledges that there will always be uncertainties and challenges ahead, but it encourages individuals to reserve their mental and emotional resources for the present moment. By not dwelling excessively on hypothetical future scenarios, one can maintain a sense of focus, clarity, and resilience to tackle challenges effectively as they arise.

The phrase is often used as a form of reassurance or a reminder to not allow potential future concerns to overshadow the present. It advises against spending excessive time and energy worrying about events that may or may not occur, as this can detract from fully engaging in and enjoying the current moment.

The expression is frequently employed in decision-making contexts. When faced with a complex or uncertain decision, "cross that bridge when you come to it" suggests that it is more productive to gather information, assess the situation, and make a choice when the decision needs to be made. It discourages overthinking or obsessing about potential outcomes that may never materialize or could change by the time they become relevant.

However, it is important to note that "cross that bridge when you come to it" should not be misconstrued as an excuse for procrastination or negligence. It is not a call to ignore or evade foreseeable problems or responsibilities. Instead, it emphasizes the value of prioritizing the present moment and addressing challenges with a clear mind and relevant information.

In summary, "cross that bridge when you come to it" advises individuals to focus on the present and not become overly preoccupied with future uncertainties. It encourages dealing with problems and making decisions when they actually arise, rather than wasting mental energy on hypothetical scenarios. By embracing this mindset, individuals can maintain a sense of clarity, resilience, and effective decision-making while avoiding unnecessary worry and anxiety about the future.

Questions for Discussion

1. Do you find it challenging to adopt a "cross that bridge when you come to it" mindset? How do you typically navigate the balance between planning for the future and avoiding excessive worry about what lies ahead?
 2. Can you think of a specific situation where you successfully applied the principle of "cross that bridge when you come to it"? How did it affect your decision-making process and overall well-being?
 3. Are there any drawbacks or potential pitfalls to solely focusing on the present and delaying consideration of future challenges? How do you strike a balance between being present-oriented and responsibly preparing for the future?
 4. How can the principle of "cross that bridge when you come to it" be applied in the workplace or professional settings? Are there specific strategies or approaches you have found effective in managing uncertainty and making sound decisions when faced with potential future obstacles?
 5. In a world that often emphasizes planning, goal-setting, and being proactive, how can we cultivate a healthy mindset that embraces the idea of addressing challenges as they arise, rather than becoming overwhelmed by trying to anticipate and solve every problem in advance? Are there any practical exercises or mental shifts that can help in adopting this approach?
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