

Idiom by Lon Yan

氣定神閒

qi4 ding4 shen2 xian2

An intruder climbed on the desk of presenter Alastair Stewart as he was interviewing a young mother and her boy about milk allergy during live broadcast on UK's ITV.

But instead of calling security or freaking out, Stewart maintained a smile on his face and announced that the intruder may "do whatever she chooses to do over the next couple of minutes."

The intruder was, in fact, the interviewee's toddler daughter Iris, who burst into the studio and started her attempt to climb the desk in full camera view. She finally succeeded and positioned herself in front of Stewart.

Despite the rather unexpected development, the veteran broadcaster continued without missing a beat, and even high-fived the girl at the end of the segment.

The Telegraph reported that viewers praised Stewart for keeping his cool. Headline

Daily's report described him as "氣定神閒" (*qi4 ding4 shen2 xian2*).

"氣" (*qi4*) is "air," "breath," "the mental status," "定" (*ding4*) "stable," "calm," "神" (*shen2*) "mind," "spirit," "energy," "expression," and "閒" (*xian2*) "idle," "relaxed," "leisurely." Literally, "氣定神閒" (*qi4 ding4 shen2 xian2*) is "mentally calm and expression relaxed."

"氣定神閒" (*qi4 ding4 shen2 xian2*) means "calm and composed." We don't use the idiom in normal situations. The idiom is used to describe a person who remains unperturbed in an upsetting situation. Acting "氣定神閒" (*qi4 ding4 shen2 xian2*) is the hallmark of someone who is very experienced in handling crises.

"氣急敗壞" (*qi4 ji2 bai4 huai4*) describes the opposite behavior. The idiom means "to be fuming with rage," "to be utterly discomfited," "to become flustered and exasperated."

Terms containing the character "閒" (*xian2*) include:

閒人 (*xian2 ren2*) – an idle person

閒事 (*xian2 shi4*) – an unimportant matter

閒話 (*xian2 hua4*) – gossips; tattle

閒錢 (*xian2 qian2*) – spare cash; idle money