

TRACY CRUMP'S LIST OF CLICHÉS

Sayings, homilies, maxims, truisms, old saws, proverbs, aphorisms, euphemisms, figures of speech, adages, axioms . . .

Whatever you want to call them, clichés are the everyday expressions we've grown up with and express exactly the right sentiment for the occasion. They are familiar and comforting, like an old bathrobe, and I love them. Unfortunately, editors don't. (Read [The Write Life](#) Nov. 2008 to see why.)

I once started a list of common sayings from the Bible and was surprised by how much of our everyday speech stems from Scripture. You will see Scripture references next to those I've found. Most come from the King James Version, and some may be derived from the meaning of the text rather than an exact quote.

A

Above all else
Above board
Absence makes the heart grow fonder
[He's an] accident waiting to happen
According to the letter of the law
Ace in the hole
Actions speak louder than words
Act your age, not your IQ
Add insult to injury
Add the finishing touches
After a while, crocodile
Against all odds
Agree to disagree
All done in
All downhill from there
[I'm] all ears
All is vanity (Ecclesiastes 1:2 and others)
[In] all kinds of weather
All's fair in love and war
All's well that ends well
All talk and no action
All that glitters is not gold
[He's] all thumbs
All tuckered out
Alright already
Always a bridesmaid, never a bride
And neither the twain shall meet
Ants in his pants
Anyone with a lick of sense
Apple a day keeps the doctor away
Apple never falls far from the tree
Apple of my eye
April showers bring May flowers
[He would] argue with a fence post
[He's been] around the block
As American as apple pie

As bald as a billiard ball
As bald as an egg
As black as coal
As black as night
As black as pitch
As blind as a bat
As big as a mountain
As bright as day
As broad as a barn
As busy as a beaver
As busy as a bee
As busy as Grand Central Station
As clean as a whistle
As clear as mud
As clumsy as an ox
As comfortable as old shoes
As cool as a cucumber
As crazy as a Bessie bug
As crazy as a loon
As crooked as a dog's hind leg
As cute as a bug
As cute as a button
As cute as a bug
As dead as a doornail
As different as night and day
As dry as a bone
As drunk as a skunk
As dumb as a box of rocks
As dumb as a doornail
As easy as pie
As excited as a kid at Christmas
As far as the east is from the west (Psalm 103:12)
As fast as greased lightning
As fat as a pig
As fine as frog's hair
As fit as a fiddle
As flat as a pancake
As full as a tick

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As gentle as a lamb
As good as dead (Hebrews 11:12)
As green as grass
As happy as a clam
As happy as a lark
As happy as a pig in mud (2 Peter 2:22)
As hard as a rock
As heavy as lead
As high as a kite
As high as a mountain
As honest as the day is long
As hungry as a bear
As hungry as a horse
As if your life depended on it
Ask me no questions, I'll tell you no lies
As limp as a dishrag
As light as a feather
As loose as a goose
As luck would have it
As mad as a hatter
As mad as a hornet
As mad as a wet hen
As mean as a junkyard dog
As mean as a snake
As nervous as a long-tailed cat in a room
 full of rocking chairs
As nutty as a fruitcake
As old as dirt
As plain as day
As plain as the nose on your face
As playful as a kitten
As pleased as punch
As poor as a church mouse
As pretty as a peach
As pretty as a picture
As proud as a peacock
As quick as a flash
As quick as a fox
As quick as a wink
As quiet as a mouse
As red as a beet
As right as rain
As sharp as a razor
As sharp as a tack
As shiny as a new dime
As silent as the grave
As skinny as a rail (pole, beanpole)
As slick as glass
As slippery as an eel
As slow as Christmas
As slow as molasses in winter
As sly as a fox
As smart as a whip
As smooth as glass
As soft as a baby's bottom

As sour as a lemon
As strong as an ox
As sweet as honey
As sweet as sugar
As snug as a bug in a rug
As stiff as a board
As still as a statue
As stubborn as a mule
As sure as you're born
As the crow flies
As thick as thieves
As tough as nails
As weak as a kitten
As welcome as the flowers in May
As white as a ghost
As white as a sheet
As white as snow
As wild as a banshee
As wise as an owl
As you may have guessed by now
At death's door
At every turn
At face value
At his beck and call
At my wit's end (Psalm 107:27)
At the drop of a hat
At the end of my rope
Avoid it like the plague

B

Babes in the woods
Back by popular demand
Back in the groove
Back off
Back to full steam
Back to square one
Back with a vengeance
Bad hair day
Bad news travels fast
Bad things come in threes
Bad to the bone
Bald-faced lie
[My] ball and chain
[The] ball's in your court
[A] banner year
Bare facts
Bare minimum
Barking up the wrong tree
Bark is worse than his bite
Barrel of fun
[He has] bats in his belfry
Beat him hands down
Beat him to a pulp

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Beat him to the punch
[I could] beat him with one hand tied behind my back
Beat their swords into plowshares (Isaiah 2:4)
Beat them at their own game
Beat the odds
[I could] beat the sock off him
Beauty is only skin deep
Became abundantly clear
Been there; done that; bought the t-shirt
Before my very eyes
Before you can say, "Jack Robinson"
Beginner's luck
Beginning to get the picture
Behind every great man is a woman
[I'm] being framed
Be my guest
[I] bent over backwards for him
[Let me] bend your ear
Benefit of the doubt
Be of good cheer (Matthew 9:2 and others)
Be of good courage (Psalm 27:14)
Be on the lookout
Best is yet to come
Best laid plans of mice and men
Best of both worlds
Best thing since sliced bread
Best things in life are free
Be swift to hear and slow to speak (Psalm 90:12)
Be there with bells on
[My] better half
Better late than never
Better safe than sorry
Better to run away and live to fight another day
[I'd] bet the farm on it
Between a rock and a hard place
[You] bet your (blue) bloomers
[You can] bet your life on it
Beyond a shadow of a doubt
Bide your time
Big fish in a little pond
Bird in the hand is worth two in the bush
Birds and the bees
Birds of a feather flock together
Bite your tongue
Bit off more than he could chew
Bit the dust
Blanket of snow
Blessed be the ties that bind
Bless his heart
[A] blessing in disguise
Blew his top
Blondes have more fun
Blood is thicker than water
Blood will tell
Blow-by-blow account
Blows my mind
Blow the socks off him
Bolt from the blue
Bone of contention
[I have a] bone to pick with you
Boob tube
Booby prize
Boot him out
Bored silly
Bored to tears
Born with a silver spoon in his mouth
Bosom buddies
Bottomless pit
Bottom line is . . .
Bought the farm
Bouncing off the walls
Boxed his ears
Bragging rights
Break a leg
Breathed his last
Breathing down my neck
[He's a] brick shy of a load (or any variation)
Broke my heart
Brought him to his knees
[You've been] buffaloed
Buck stops here
Build a better mousetrap
[Just a] bump in the road
Burned to a crisp
Burning the midnight oil
Burst my bubble
Bury the hatchet
Busting my chops
Butter wouldn't melt in his mouth
By all means
By and far
By and large
By any stretch of the imagination
By George, I think he's got it
By leaps and bounds
By the same token
By the skin of my teeth (Job 19:20 NIV)
By the scruff of his neck

C

Called out on the carpet
Calm before the storm
Calm, cool and collected
Came out smelling like a rose
Can I get an amen?
Can't fight his way out of a paper bag
Can't keep a good man down (Proverbs 24:16)
Can't see past the end of his own nose

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Can't see the forest for the trees
Can't take no for an answer
Can we talk? (BP)
[He's a] carbon copy of . . .
Carries more clout
Carrying the weight of the world on his shoulders
Case in point
Cast your bread upon the waters (Ecclesiastes 11:1)
Cast your pearls before swine (Matthew 7:6)
Catch as catch can
Catch my drift?
Catch ya later
Cat got your tongue?
Cat's out of the bag
Caught between a rock and a hard place
[A] chain is only as strong as its weakest link
Change with the times
Caught red-handed
Caught with his hand in the cookie jar
Cave in
Caught with his pants down
Changed his tune
Charley horse in my leg
[That's a] cheap trick
Cheaters never prosper
Check it out
Cheek to jowl
[Let's] chew the fat
Chickens have come home to roost
Chief cook and bottle washer
[It's] child's play
Chill out
Chip off the ol' block
Choose the lesser of two evils
Civility costs nothing
Cleanliness is next to godliness
Climbing the corporate ladder
[She's a] clinging vine
[The] clock is ticking
Close but no cigar
Clothes make the man
Coldhearted
Come clean
Comes in handy
Come what may
Coming down the pike
Coming into the home stretch
Coming of age
Coming out of the woodwork
Cool your heels
Cost me an arm and a leg
Costs a pretty penny
Couldn't hit the broad side of a barn
Couldn't hold a candle to him
Couldn't leave well enough alone

Couldn't put my finger on it
Count the cost (Luke 14:28)
Count your blessing
Cover all the bases
Crack the whip
Crazy like a fox
Cream of the crop
Creatures of habit
Cross your heart and hope to die; stick a needle
 in your eye
[We'll] cross that bridge when we come to it
[My] cross to bear (Luke 9:23; Luke 14:27)
[A] crowd pleaser
Cry uncle
Cry wolf
Curiosity killed the cat
Cuss a blue streak
[He] cusses like a sailor
Cut and dried
Cut and run
Cut from the same cloth
Cut his teeth on it
Cut it out
Cut off your nose to spite your face
Cutting corners
[On the] cutting edge
Cut to the chase

D

Dancing with the devil
Dangle a carrot in front of his nose
Day in and day out
Day late and a dollar short
[His] days are numbered
Dead as a doornail
Dead duck
Dead in the water
Dead on
Dead set against it
Dead to the world
Dead weight
[He has a] death wish
[The] deck is stacked against you
[A] defining moment
Den of thieves (Luke 19:46)
Depend on it
[The] devil is in the details
Did me a world of good
Didn't bat an eyelash
Didn't know him from Adam
[I] didn't just fall off the turnip truck
Didn't sleep a wink
Digging my own grave

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Different strokes for different folks
Dime a dozen
Dirt cheap
Dirty work afoot
[He can] dish it out but he can't take it
Divide and conquer
Do as I say, not as I do
Doesn't amount to a hill of beans
Doesn't have a leg to stand on
Doesn't have enough sense to get in out of the rain
Doesn't have two nickels to rub together
Doesn't know when to come in out of the rain
Doesn't stand a chance
Dog and pony show
Dog days of summer
Dog eat dog world
[It's a] dog's life
Doing time
Do it well or not at all
Do it with all your might (Ecclesiastes 9:10)
Do not give the devil a foothold (Ephesians 4:27 NIV)
Don't beat around the bush
Don't bite the hand that feeds you
Don't borrow trouble (JU)
Don't burn your bridges behind you
Don't bury your head in the sand
Don't count your chickens before they're hatched
Don't get bent out of shape
Don't kick a man when he's down
[I] don't give a flip
Don't go to bed angry (Ephesians 4:26)
Don't hold your breath
Don't judge someone until you've walked
 a mile in his shoes
Don't jump the gun
Don't know what to make of it
Don't let him get your goose
Don't look a gift horse in the mouth
Don't major on the minors
Don't mention it
Don't muddy the waters
Don't overstay your welcome
Don't pull any punches
Don't put all your eggs in one basket
Don't put off til tomorrow what you can do today
Don't put the cart before the horse
Don't rain on my parade
Don't rock the boat
Don't shoot till you see the whites of their eyes
Don't sit there like a bump on a log
Don't spill the beans
Don't spit in the wind
Don't sugar coat it
Don't sweat the small stuff
Don't think twice about it

Don't throw good money after bad
Don't throw out the baby with the bath water
Don't wear out your welcome
Dot your i's and cross your t's
Doubting Thomas (John 20:25)
Do unto others as you would have them
 do unto you (Matthew 7:12)
Do what I say, not what I do
Down and out
Down in the dumps
Down in the mouth
Down on his luck
Down the drain
Down the hatch
Down to earth
Do your own thing
Drama queen
Draw a line in the sand
Dream big
[You] drive a hard bargain
Drive me nuts
Drive me up the wall
[A] drop in the bucket
[He] dropped the ball

E

Each and every
Early bird gets the worm
Early to bed, early to rise, makes a man
 healthy, wealthy, and wise
Earn your keep
Earth shattering
Easier for a camel to go through the eye
 of a needle (Matthew 19:24)
Easier said than done
Easy come, easy go
Eat crow
Eat, drink and be merry for tomorrow we
 shall die (Luke 12:19-20)
Eats like a bird
Eats like a pig
Elbow room
[The] elephant in the room
Elvis has left the building
End of discussion
Enjoy the ride
Enough said
Err on the side of caution
Every cloud has a silver lining
Everyday heroes
Every dog has its day
Every jot and tittle (Luke 16:17)
Every man for himself

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Everything came to a grinding halt
Everything's coming up roses
Every tub sits on its own bottom
Eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth (Matthew 5:38)
[The] eye is the window of the soul
[His] eyes were bigger than his stomach
Eyes wide open

F

Face only a mother could love
Face that could stop a clock
Face to face
Facts of life
Fame is fleeting
Fair and square
Fair to middlin'
Faith as a grain of mustard seed (Matthew 17:20)
Faith strong enough to move mountains (Matthew 17:20)
Familiarity breeds contempt
[That's a] far cry from . . .
Far fetched
Farthest thing from my mind
Fat chance
Fate worse than death
Feast or famine
[A] feel for the lay of the land
Fences make good neighbors
Fiddling around
Fight fire with fire
Fighting a losing battle
Fight like cats and dogs
Finders keepers, losers weepers
Fine and dandy
Fire and brimstone
First impressions count
First things first
Fishing for compliments
Fish or cut bait
Fits like a glove
Fits like an old shoe
Fit to be tied
Flash in the pan
[It] floored me
Flotsam and jetsam
Fly by the seat of my pants
Fly in the ointment (Ecclesiastes 10:1)
Follow in his footsteps
Food for thought
Fool's gold
For all I know
For all he was worth
For all intents and purposes

Force of habit
Force to be reckoned with
For crying out loud
Forewarned is forearmed
Forgive and forget
For good measure
Fork in the road
For Pete's sake
[This is] for the birds
For the love of Mike
For the sake of argument
For your own good
Foxes are guarding the henhouse
Frog in my throat
From here to kingdom come
From sea to shining sea
From start to finish
From your mouth to God's ear
Front and center
Full steam ahead

G

Gather ye roses while ye may
Gave me the go ahead
Get a grip
Get a life
Get a move on
Get a rise out of him
Get 'er done
Get in on the ground floor
Get it up and running
Get off my back
Get on the ball
Get on the stick
Get on with it
Get out of my face
Gets in your blood
[That] gets my goat
Get some shut-eye
[He] gets under my skin
Get to the point
Get the hang of it
Get the lead out
Get the show on the road
Get the skinny on it
Getting down to the wire
[I want to] get this off my chest
Get with the program
Get your act together
Get your beauty sleep
Get your ducks in a row
Get your feet wet
Get your foot in the door

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Get your head in the game
Get your mind out of the gutter
Get your money's worth
Give credit where credit is due
Give him an inch, he'll take a mile
Give him a piece of my mind
Give it a go
Give it up
Give it your best shot
Give me a break
Give me a leg up
Give me a rundown
[I'd] give my eye teeth for . . .
Give the devil his due
Give up the ghost
Give you a fat lip
[A] glimmer of hope
Go back to the drawing board
God forbid! (Romans 6:2 and many others)
God loves a cheerful giver (2 Corinthians 9:7)
[They that] go down to the sea in ships (Psalm 107:23)
[That's the] God's honest truth
Goes above and beyond the call of duty
Goes against the grain
Goes without saying
Go for it
Going down for the count
Going ninety to nothing
Gold digger (GS)
Going to hell in a handbasket
Good deed for the day
[The] good ol' days
Good riddance
Good Samaritan (Luke 10:30-37)
Good things come to those who wait
Good to go
[My] goose is cooked
Go out on a limb
Got a bum rap
[I've] got bigger fish to fry
Go the distance
Go the extra mile (Matthew 5:41)
Got himself into hot water
Got his wires crossed
Got it down pat
Got off Scot free
Go to great lengths
Got the gist of it
Got up on the wrong side of the bed
Go with the flow
Grace under fire
Grace under pressure
Grasping at straws
Grass is always greener on the other side

Greater love hath no man than to lay
down his life for his friend (John 15:13)
Great minds think alike
Green around the gills
Green-eyed monster
[He has a] green thumb
Grin and bear it

H

[They] had a falling out
Hail, hardy and well-met
Hair-raising experience
Half-baked idea
Hand in hand
Hand over fist
Hand picked
Hard-hitting journalism
Hard to come by
Harebrained idea
[He] has an ax to grind
Has the world by the tail
Haste makes waste
Have a go at it
[He wants to] have his cake and eat it, too
[I'll] have his hide
Having a field day
Having fun at my expense
Head and shoulders above the rest
Head over heels in love
Head start
Heads up
Heard it through the grapevine
[He has a] heart of gold
[My] heart skipped a beat
Heaven forbid
Heavy-handed
Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned
Help yourself
Here today, gone tomorrow
He who laughs last, laughs best
He who lives by the sword dies by the sword
Hindsight is 20/20
His day is coming (Psalm 37:13)
History in the making
History is doomed to repeat itself
Hit a brick wall
Hit a nerve
Hit close to home
Hit me like a ton of bricks
Hit me with your best shot
Hit rock bottom
[Let's] hit the hay
Hit the nail on the head

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Hit the road
Hit the roof
Hitting below the belt
Hold his feet to the fire
Holding his own
Hold your horses
Holy cow!
Home sweet home
Hone in
Hook, line and sinker
[Just a] hop, skip and a jump away
Horse of a different color
Hot potato
Hotter than a firecracker
House of cards
Hugs and kisses xxoo
Hung on for dear life
[She] hung onto his every word
[The] hurrier I go the behinder I get

I

I beg to differ
Ice water in his veins
[The] icing on the cake
Idle hands are the devil's workshop
[An] idle mind is the devil's workshop
If anything can go wrong, it will
If at first you don't succeed, try, try again
If God had wanted us to fly, He would
 have given us wings (or any variation)
If I had a dime (nickel) for every time I...
If . . . I'll eat my hat
If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is
If it's worth doing, it's worth doing well
If I've told you once, I've told you a thousand times...
If looks could kill
If Mama ain't happy, ain't nobody happy
If the shoe fits, wear it
If wishes were horses, beggars would ride
If you can't run with the big dogs, stay on the porch
If you can't stand the heat, stay out of the kitchen
If you lie down with dogs, you'll wake up with fleas
If you play your cards right
If you scratch my back, I'll scratch yours
If you want something done right, do it yourself
Ignorance is bliss
I'll be a monkey's uncle
I'll believe it when I see it
I'll grant you that
I'll give him a piece of my mind
I'll take your word for it
In a nutshell

In a pinch
I never dreamed this would happen
In fits and starts (or spurts)
In for a rude awakening
In full swing
In hog heaven
In hot pursuit
In like Flynn
Ins and outs
In seventh heaven
[He has the] inside track
In the blink of an eye
In the doldrums
In the know
In the long run
In the meantime (Luke 12:1)
In the same boat
Into the wild, blue yonder
In your face
Is the Pope Catholic?
It didn't happen overnight
It just so happens
In one ear and out the other
It's all Greek to me
It's beyond me
It's just the booze talking
It's no skin off my nose
It's not what you know but who you know
It's the nature of the beast
It's the thought that counts
It will all come out in the wash
I wish I could be a fly on the wall
I wouldn't be caught dead wearing that
I wouldn't have it if they handed it to me
 on a silver platter
I wouldn't wear that to a dog fight

J

[That's] Jim dandy
Johnny on the spot
Join the crowd
Judge not that you be not judged (Matthew 7:1)
Juggling too many plates at one time
Jump at the chance
Jump from the frying pan into the fire
Jump in head first
Jump on the bandwagon
Jump through hoops
Just between you and me and the lamppost
Just blowing smoke
Just do it

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Just goes to show
Just the facts, ma'am
Just what I need
Just what the doctor ordered

K

Keep a weather eye out
Keep both feet on the ground
Keep him in line
Keeping things on a even keel
Keeps coming back, like a bad penny
Keep the sunny side up
Keep this under your hat
Keep your britches on
Keep your shirt on
Keep your nose to the grindstone
[That's a] kick in the pants
Kicks like a mule
Kick the bucket
Kill two birds with one stone
Kissing cousins
Kiss of death
Kiss that one goodbye
Kith and kin
Knee high to a grasshopper
Knee-jerk reaction
[My] knees were as weak as water (Ezekiel 7:17)
[A] knockdown, drag out fight
Knock 'em dead
Knock his lights out
[That will] knock his socks (hat) off
Knowing full well
Knowledge is power
[You are] known by the friends you keep
[I] know which side my bread is
 battered on

L

Laid back
[I haven't] laid eyes on you since . . .
Laid to rest
Lamebrained idea
Lame duck
Land o' Goshen
Land of milk and honey (Exodus 3:8 and many
 others)
Language of love
[That's the] last straw
Later, gator
Laugh and the world laughs with you;
 cry and you cry alone

Laughter is the best medicine (Proverbs 17:22)
Laying low
Lay it to rest
Lay the groundwork
[The] lead dog has the best view
Leading a dog's life
Leave him in a lurch
Leave no stone unturned
Leaves me lying awake at night
Led me down the primrose path
Left a bad taste in my mouth
Leopard doesn't change its spots
Lesser of two evils
Less is more
Let bygones be bygones
Let he who is without sin cast the first stone
Let me make this perfectly clear
Let nature take its course
Let sleeping dogs lie
Let the chips fall where they may
Liar, liar, pants on fire!
[He doesn't have a] lick of sense
Life goes on
Life has its ups and downs
Life is just a bowl of cherries
Life is like a box of chocolates
Life is not a bed of roses
Life isn't always fair
Life is short; eat dessert first
Life's ebb and flow
[I can see the] light at the end of the tunnel
Lighthouse in a storm
[The] light just came on
[The] light's on but nobody's home
Like a breath of fresh air
Like a breath of spring
Like a bull in a China closet (shop)
Like a cat on a hot tin roof
Like a dog returning to its vomit
 (Proverbs 26:11 and others)
Like a father to me
Like a fox in the henhouse
Like a fine wine, he gets better with age
Like a fish out of water
Like a hand in a glove
Like a lamb to the slaughter
Like a loose cannon
Like a month of Sundays
Like a mother to me
Like a port in a storm
Like a sack of potatoes
Like a sitting duck
Like a swarm of flies
Like a wolf in sheep's clothing
Like babes in the woods

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Like beating a dead horse
Like beating your head against a wall
Like father, like son
Like flies to honey
Like it's going out of style
Like kids in a candy store
Like looking for a needle in a haystack
Like moths around a flame
Like music to my ears
Like pulling teeth
Like rats leaving a sinking ship
Like rubbing salt in a wound
Like ships that pass in the night
Like shooting fish in a barrel
Like talking to a brick wall
Like two peas in a pod
Like the blind leading the blind (Matthew 5:14)
Like water off a duck's back
Like white on rice
Limping along on three wheels
Line drawn in the sand
Lions, tigers and bears. Oh, my!
Little bird told me (Ecclesiastes 10:20)
Little did I know
Little pitchers have big ears
Little things mean a lot
Live and learn
Live and let live
[He] lived to a ripe old age
[You'll] live to regret it
Live within your means
Living hand to mouth
Living high on the hog
Living on borrowed time
Living on the edge
Lo and behold
Locked up tighter than a steel drum
Lock him up and throw away the key
Long and short of it
Long odds
Look alive
Look before you leap
Look down your nose
Looked like a lost child
[He] looks like death warmed over
[He] looks like something the cat drug in
[He] looks like the cat that ate the canary
Look who's talking
Loose cannon
Loosey goosey
[He's] lost his marbles
Lost his shirt
Loud enough to wake the dead
Love at first sight

Love covers a multitude of sins (1 Peter 4:8 and others)
Love him like a brother
Love is blind
Love is in the eye of the beholder
[He's the] love of my life
Love thy neighbor (Matthew 22:39)
Love wholeheartedly
Lower than a snake's belly
Lower the boom
[Let's] lower your ears
Luck of the Irish
Lucky duck
Lying through his teeth

M

Made a mint
Made me a deal I couldn't refuse
Made my day
Make a bee line
Make hay while the sun shines
[You can] make a killing
Makes my blood boil
Make my day
Makes life worth living
Make yourself right at home
Make you sit up and take notice
Making up for lost time
Man does not live by bread alone (Matthew 4:4)
[A] man for all seasons
Man hungry
[He's a] man of few words
Many hands make light work
Marching to the beat of a different drummer
Marvelous to behold
[A] match made in heaven
[He's having a] meltdown
Meet your maker
[He has a] memory like an elephant
Mend your fences
Met his match
[The] Midas touch
Middle-age spread
Might makes right
Milk it for all it's worth
[My] mind is made up
Mind like a steel trap
Mind over matter
Mind your own business
Mind your p's and q's
Misery loves company
Missed it by a mile

TRACY CRUMP'S LIST OF CLICHÉS

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Missed the boat
Missed the mark
[A] miss is as good as a mile
Money doesn't grow on trees
Money is burning a hole in his pocket
[The love of] money is the root of all evil
(1 Timothy 6:10)
Money talks
Monkey see, monkey do
Morally bankrupt
[It's] more blessed to give than to receive (Acts 20:35)
More fun than a barrel of monkeys
More than I bargained for
More than meets the eye
More than the hairs of my head (Psalm 69:4)
[The] more, the merrier
Mortal enemies
Mug shot
Mule-headed
Mum's the word
Murphy's law
Music to my ears
Music hath charms to soothe the savage beast
(breast)
My cup runneth over (Psalm 23:5)
My bad
My hands are tied
My lips are sealed
My one and only
My stars
My way or the highway

N

[That's the] name of the game
Nature abhors a vacuum
Nearly jumped out of my skin
Necessity is the mother of invention
[The] need for speed
Need-to-know basis
Neither a borrower nor a lender be
[That's] neither here nor there
[He] never met a stranger
Never the twain shall meet
New day is dawning
New-fangled thing
[Here's a] news flash
Next to impossible
Next to nothing
Nice guys finish last
Nice going
[In the] nick of time
Nip and tuck
Nip it in the bud

[It's a] no brainer
No good deed goes unpunished
No holds barred
[He's] no longer in the picture
No more Mr. Nice Guy
No news is good news
No place to lay your head (Matthew 8:20, Luke 9:58)
No questions asked
No rest for the weary
Nosebleed section
Not a Chinaman's chance
Not a cloud in the sky
Not a dry eye in the house
Not a friend in the world
Not a happy camper
Not a minute's peace
Not a penny to his name
[He's] not a spring chicken any more
Not by a long shot
Not by the hair of my chinny chin chin
Not everything it's cracked up to be
Nothing new under the sun (Ecclesiastes 1:9 NIV)
[That's] nothing to shake a stick at
[That's] nothing to sneeze at
Nothing ventured, nothing gained
No time like the present
Not on my watch
Not on your life
[We're] not out of the woods yet
[He's] not the brightest crayon in the box (or any variation)
[You're] not the only pebble on the beach (or any variation)
Not up to snuff
Not whether you won or lost that counts, but how you played the game
Not worth a plug nickel
Not worth his salt
No way, José

O

Off the charts
Off-color remark
Off the deep end
Oh, man!
Oh, what a tangled web we weave
when first we practice to deceive
Old enough to know better
Old habits die hard
[That's] old hat
[My] old stomping grounds
Offer you can't refuse
On a wing and a prayer

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[He's] on board with us
Once begun is half done
Once in a blue moon
Once-in-a-lifetime opportunity
One bad apple spoils the barrel
On edge
[In] one fell swoop
One good turn deserves another
One hand washes the other
One last-ditch effort
One picture is worth a thousand words
One-track mind
On his last leg
Only time will tell
[We're] on the same wavelength
Only two things are sure—death and taxes
[Sitting] on the edge of my seat
[This one's] on the house
On the lookout
On the other hand
On the right track
On the same page
On the verge of tears
On top of his game
Opinions are like noses; everybody has one
[The] other side of the coin
[An] ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure
Out in left field
Out of my league
Out of the blue (out of a clear blue sky)
Out of the mouth of babes (Psalm 8:2)
Out of pocket
Out of sight, out of mind
Out of the question
Out-of-the-way place
Over the hill
Over the long haul
Over the top

P

Pace yourself
Pack it in
Painted himself into a corner
Pales in comparison
Paralyzed by fear
[It's all] part of the package
Party animal
Passed with flying colors
Passing the mantle
Past comes back to haunt you
Passing the buck
[He has the] patience of Job
Patience is a virtue

Pat yourself on the back
Pay through the nose
Pearls of wisdom
Pen is mightier than the sword
Pennies from heaven
Penny for your thoughts
Penny saved is a penny earned
Penny wise and pound foolish
People who live in glass houses shouldn't throw stones
[He's the] picture of health
Pie in the sky
Pig in a poke
Pine away (Ezekiel 24:23)
Plain and simple
Play by the rules
Play devil's advocate
Play it by ear
Plenty of fish in the ocean
Plunk down
Poetry in motion
Point blank
Point of no return
Pouring it on thick
Power of the pen
Powers that be
Practice makes perfect
Preaching to the choir
Pressed for time
Pretty is as pretty does
[The] price is right
Pride goes before a fall (Proverbs 16:18)
[He] prides himself in . . .
Promised me the moon
Proof positive
[The] proof is in the pudding
[He] pulled the rug out from under me
Pulled the wool over my eyes
[You're] pulling my leg
Punch drunk
Punch your lights out
Purrs like a kitten
Pushing the envelope
Pushing up daisies
Put a burr under his saddle
Put a cork in it
Put a sock in it
Put him through the ringer
Put him out of his misery
Put it on the back burner
Put my foot in my mouth
Put on your game face
[He] puts his pants on one leg at a time
Put something aside for a rainy day
Put that in your pipe and smoke it

TRACY CRUMP'S LIST OF CLICHÉS

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Put the monkey on his back
[You're] putting me on
Putting on a long face
Put up or shut up
Put your best foot forward
Put your money where your mouth is
Put your shoulder to the wheel
Put your thinking cap on

Q

Queen for a day
[The] quick and the dead (1 Peter 4:5)
Quit yer bellyachin'

R

[The] race is not to the swift nor the
battle to the strong (Ecclesiastes 9:11)
Raining cats and dogs
Raised a ruckus
Raises a red flag
Raising Cain
Raked me over the coals
Ran for his life
Ran smack dab into it
Ratchet it up
Rattle his cage
Read me the riot act
Read my lips
Ready to roll
[The] real scoop
[You] reap what you sow (Galatians 6:7)
Red sky at morning, sailors take warning. Red sky at
night, sailors' delight
Reinvent the wheel
Render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's
(Matthew 22:21)
Rest assured
Rest on his laurels
Ride off into the sunset
[He knows the] right buttons to push
Right off the bat
Right on target
Right on the dot
Right on the money
Right on the nose
Right out of the shoot
Right up my alley
Righty tighty, lefty loosey
Ringing off the wall
Ripe for the picking
Rise and shine

[The] road less traveled
[The] road not taken
[The] road to hell is paved with good intentions
Robbing Peter to pay Paul
[He looks like he was] rode hard and put up wet
[A] rolling stone gathers no moss
Roll with the punches
Root, hog, or die
Roped and tied
[A] rose by any other name would smell as sweet
Rub salt into the wound
Rub your face in it
Ruled it out
Rule of thumb
Rumor has it
Run him out of town on a rail
Running around like a chicken with its head cut off
Run it up the flagpole and see who salutes
Run like the wind
Runs me ragged
[I want to] run something by you
Run the gamut
Rushing willy nilly

S

Sadder but wiser
Sad sack
Sad to say
Safe and sound
Safety in numbers
Salt of the earth (Matthew 5:13)
Same old sixes and sevens
Sands of time
[He] sang like a canary
Santa Claus is watching you
Saved by the bell
Saved the best for last
Save for a rainy day
Saw the light
Say cheese
Say what you mean and mean what you say
Say when
Scapegoat
Scared the living daylights out of me
Scared to death
School of hard knocks
Scraping the bottom of the barrel
Scream bloody murder
Second guessing myself
Second nature
Seeing is believing
Seemed like an eternity
See no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil

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See you later, alligator
Seize the day
Selling like hotcakes
Sell out
Send up a balloon
Send up a smoke signal
Set his teeth on edge (Jeremiah 31:30)
Set the world on fire
Set the world on its head
Sitting on pins and needles
Shake a leg
Shaking in my boots
Shaking like a leaf
Sharper than a two-edged sword
She's a dish
Shirttail relatives
[The] shoe is on the other foot now
[A] shoe in
Shooting the breeze
Shoot yourself in the foot
Short and sweet
Short end of the stick
[The] shorter, the better
Short-sighted
[A] shot across the bow
Shot in the dark
Shot up like a bean sprout
Showed his true colors
Show me the money
Shut your (pie) hole (trap)
[A] sign of the times
Silence is golden
Simple minds, simple pleasures
Sings like a canary
Sink or swim
Sit tight
Sitting duck
Sitting on cloud nine
Six feet under
Six of one and half dozen of the other
Skin and bones
Sky's the limit
Sleep it off
Slept like a baby
Slept like a log
Slim chance
Slipped him a Mickey
Slippery slope
[On a] slow boat to China
Slow and steady wins the race
Slow poke
[He's one] smart cookie
Smarty pants
Smiling like a Cheshire cat
Snail mail
Snake in the grass
Snooping around
Snow job
Soar like an eagle
So close yet so far
So far so good
So hot you could fry an egg on the sidewalk
So hungry I could eat a horse
So mad I could spit nails
Son of a gun
So quiet you could hear a pin drop
So to speak
Soul mates
[My] sources dried up
Sour grapes
Sowing his wild oats
Spare the rod, spoil the child (Proverbs 13:24)
Speak for yourself
[You're] speaking my language
Speak with forked tongue
Spells disaster
Spinning like a top
Spirit is willing but the flesh is weak (Matthew 26:41)
Spit and polish
[He's the] spitting image of . . .
[You're just] splitting hairs
Spoiling for a fight
Spoke too soon
Squeaky wheel gets the grease
Squirrel it away
Stabbed me in the back
[I'd] stake my reputation on it
Standing room only
Stand in the gap (Ezekiel 22:30)
Stand on your own two feet
Stands to reason
Stand the test of time
Stand your ground
[That's a] star in your crown
Start the ball to rolling
Stay out of my hair
Steer clear of that
Step up to the plate
Stick in the mud
Sticks and stones may break my bones,
 but words will never hurt me
Sticks like glue
Sticks out like a sore thumb
Stiff-necked (Exodus 32:9 and many others)
[A] still small voice (1 Kings 19:12)
Still waters run deep
Stinks to high heaven
Stop and smell the roses
[He's a] straight shooter
Strain at a gnat and swallow a camel

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Straw that broke the camel's back
Streetwalker
Strength in number
[A] stitch in time saves nine
Stood the test of time
Stop on a dime
Stopped him cold
Stopped me in my tracks
Straighten up and fly right
Strike while the iron is hot
Stringing me along
Stuck like glue
Stupid is as stupid does
Such as it is
Suck him dry
Suffer in silence
Sugar and spice and all things nice
Suits me just fine
[As] sure as you're born
Sure enough
Survival of the fittest
Sweep it under the rug
Sweet!

T

Take a shot at it
Take center stage
Take him to task
Take it like a man
Take it one day at a time
Take it or leave it
Take it to heart
Take it with a grain of salt
Takes one step forward and two steps back
Takes its toll
Takes my breath away
[That] takes the cake
Takes the edge off
Take the bull by the horns
Take the wind out of his sails
Talked 'til I was blue in the face
Talking through your hat
Talk is cheap
Talks like he has marbles in his mouth
Talks out of both sides of his mouth
Talk to the hand
Tall, dark and handsome
Tanked
Tar and feather him
Tearjerker
Testing his wings
Test the waters
Thank your lucky stars
That'll be the day
That's above my pay grade
That's a bunch of hogwash
That's all she wrote
That's all well and good, but . . .
That's a load off my mind (back, shoulders) . . .
That's the pot calling the kettle black
That's the way the cookie crumbles
That's water under the bridge
There ain't no such thing as a free lunch
(TANSTAAFL)
There's something fishy about this
There's something rotten in Denmark
There's the rub
Things are coming to a head
Things are looking up
Things were touch and go
Think it over
Think it will fly?
Think outside the box
Third time's a charm
This, too, shall pass
[He's a] thorn in my side (2 Corinthians 12:7)
Thought I'd lose my mind
Three's a charm
Threw me for a loop
Threw me off track
Threw the book at me
Through rose-colored glasses
Throw a wrench into the works
Throw caution to the wind
Throw your hat in the ring
Throw in the towel
Thumb your nose
Tick a lock
Tickled my fancy
Tickled pink
Tickled to death (to pieces)
Tied the knot
[We'll have to] tighten our belts
Tighter than a tick
Tight-lipped
'Til the cows come home
Time and chance happens to all (Ecclesiastes 9:11)
Time and tide wait for no man
Time flies when you're having fun
Time heals all wounds
Time is money
Timing is everything
[On the] tip of my tongue
Tip-top shape
To beat the band
To each his own
To err is human; to forgive, divine
Toe to toe

TRACY CRUMP'S LIST OF CLICHÉS

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[She] told him how the cow ate the cabbage
To make a long story short
Tongue in cheek
Too close for comfort
Took me under his wing
Took to his bed
Took to it like a duck to water
Too little too late
Too many cooks spoil the broth
Too many chiefs and not enough Indians
Too much of a good thing
Too much on my plate
Too smart for his own good
Tooting your own horn
Top notch
To say the least
To the nth degree
To this day
[That's a] tough row to hoe
[The] train has left the station
Train of thought
Trapped like rats
Trickle-down effect
[A] treat (or anything) and a half
Tried and true
True blue
Truer words were never spoken
[I'd] trust him as far as I can throw him
[The] truth hurts
Truth is stranger than fiction
[The] truth will set you free (John 8:32)
Try as I may
Trying to keep too many balls in the air
Try this on for size
Try your hand at it
Tuck tail and run
Tuned out
Tunnel vision
Turnabout is fair play
Turn back the clock
Turning point
Turn over a new leaf
Turn over in his grave
Turn the other cheek (Matthew 5:39)
Turn up your nose
Twiddle my thumbs
[A] twinkle in your mother's eye
Twisted my arm
[My] two cents' worth
Two heads are better than one
Two's company; three's a crowd
Two sheets to the wind
Two thumbs up
Two-timer
Two wrongs don't make a right

U

Uncharted waters
[He got that] under his belt
Under the radar
Under the table
Unequally yoked (2 Corinthians 6:14)
Until the wee hours
[He's] up and down like a yoyo
Up close and personal
[It's an] uphill climb
Up in arms
Up a creek without a paddle
Up to date

V

Vanity, thy name is woman
Variety is the spice of life
[A] viper in my bosom
[A] voice crying in the wilderness (Matthew 3:3,
John 1:23)

W

Waiting for the other shoe to drop
Walk by faith (2 Corinthians 5:7)
[He thinks he can] walk on water
Walk the line
Walk the straight and narrow (Matthew 7:13-4)
[She's a] wallflower
[I] want it so bad I can taste it
[He] wants to have his cake and eat it, too
Wash your mouth out with soap
[I] wasn't born yesterday
Waste not, want not
Watched me like a hawk
Watched pot never boils
[It's all] water under the bridge
[The] wave of the future
Wave the white flag
Wear and tear
Wears his heart (feelings) on his sleeve
[It] weighs heavy on my mind
We'll cross that bridge when we come to it
Well, I never!
Went through it with a fine-toothed comb
Wet your whistle
Whatever floats your boat
What goes around comes around
What in the Sam Hill happened?
What in the world?

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What part of no do you not understand?
What's done is done
What's good for the goose is good for the gander
What's on your mind?
What's up? (Wassup?)
What would Jesus do?
Way back when
[The] wheels are turning
We'll see who is naughty and who is nice
When all is said and done
When in doubt
When in Rome, do as the Romans do
When it rains, it pours
When life hands you lemons, make lemonade
When my ship comes in
When pigs fly (BP)
When push comes to shove
When the cat's away, the mice do play
When the dust settled
When the going gets tough, the tough get going
When the time comes
[That's] where the game is won or lost
Where there's a will, there's a way
Where the sun don't shine
Where the rubber meets the road
Where's the beef?
Whet your appetite
Which came first—the chicken or the egg?
Whistle while you work
[My] whole life flashed before my eyes
Whole nine yards
[That's a] whole other ballgame
Why are you in such an all-fired hurry?
Wild goose chase
Will wonders never cease?
Winners never quit, and quitters never win
With a little help from my friends
With friends like that, who needs enemies?
With his tail tucked between his legs
Woe is me (Isaiah 6:5)
Wolf in sheep's clothing (Matthew 7:15)
Wonder of a child
Won't cost you a red cent
[That] won't cut it
Won't see the light of day
Won't take it lying down
[His] words were smoother than butter (Psalm 55:21)
[A] word to the wise is sufficient
[The] world is your oyster
World's worst
Worried to death
Worth his weight in gold
Wound tighter than a spring
Word of mouth

Wouldn't wish that on my worst enemy
Wrapped him around her little finger

X

X'd out (crossed out)
X marks the spot

Y

You are my sunshine
You are what you eat
You betcha
You can catch more flies with honey
than you can with vinegar
You can fill in the blanks

You can lead a horse to water, but you
can't make him drink
You can say that again
You can take that to the bank
You can't get blood from a turnip
You can't get there from here
You can't judge a book by its cover
You can't take it with you (Job 1:21)
You can't teach an old dog new tricks
You get the gist
You get what you pay for
You hit the nail on the head
You leave me no choice
You little stinker
You made your bed; now lie in it
You never have a second chance to make a first
impression
You're a better man than I
You're breaking my heart
You're getting on my last nerve
You're only young once
You're putting me on
Your mother doesn't live here
You snooze, you lose
You take the high road, and I'll take the low road

Z

Zip it