

Shmanners 159: Babysitting

Published April 10, 2019

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Travis: Hey, could you keep an eye on my podcast? I'll be back around midnight.

Teresa: Yeah, but what time is bedtime?

Travis: Oh, it's Shmanners.

[theme music plays]

Travis: Hello, Internet! I'm your husband host, Travis McElroy.

Teresa: And I'm your wife host, Teresa McElroy!

Travis: And you're listening to Shmanners!

Teresa: It's extraordinary etiquette...

Travis: For ordinary occasions. Hello, my dove.

Teresa: Hello, dear.

Travis: How are you?

Teresa: I'm... I'm doin' all right.

Travis: [gasps] Okay? There was some hesitation there, what—

Teresa: Well, this has nothing to do with our show.

Travis: Okay?

Teresa: But I got a partial crown on my tooth and it still kinda hurts...

Travis: Hmm, yeah, yeah, yeah, that will happen. Yeah, I've got a couple of those, now.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: 'Cause the—'cause of these bad chompers o' mine!

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Uh, but you know what? You're right. That's neither here nor there. That's not what—

Teresa: How are—

Travis: —it's not what we're about.

Teresa: How are you, dear?

Travis: I'm doing good! You know, I'm really taking kind of the spring cleaning mentality to heart. I'm getting a lot of projects around the house done.

Teresa: Yes you are, I have noticed.

Travis: Um, yeah. I'm just great. Got a grill, so I've grilled like three nights in a row, now.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Um, well—

Teresa: Hey, less dishes.

Travis: Yeah, that's true. None of that is what we're talking about. We're talking about babysitting. Which—you know what? Actually, I say that—we're getting closer to summer, um, which does always make me think about babysitting because I—I was a summer nanny, uh, for two different families over the years.

Teresa: Oh!

Travis: And I also babysat a lot. Where you ever a babysitter? Was that ever your gig?

Teresa: I mean, other than my little sister, so watching her. Um, and then... I did babysit a little bit when I got out of college. Um, but it wasn't my—it wasn't my main deal. It was kind of a—an extra, every once in a while thing.

Um, and at that time... this is something that we'll talk about. At that time, I had been a swim teacher for, like, 15 years. I had been a lifeguard for 15 years. Um, I was certified in first aid, CPR, lifeguarding, um, babysitting, blood borne pathogens, like, AED, all of that stuff. Um, and so I was totally overqualified to watch these two children.

Uh, but they were amazing, and the reason that I was asked to watch them is because I was giving them swimming lessons. Um, which is how a lot of babysitting gets started!

Travis: From doing something else?

Teresa: Right.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Well, from meeting the person somewhere else. Maybe—a lot of people ask their primary school teachers, or they ask their regular daycare providers if someone likes the—if the kids like them enough. Anything like that, that happens a lot. But no, I didn't do it as a child, other than my sister.

Travis: I babysat, uh, a family that had two kids one summer. Like, basically Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, from like, 8 to 3, every day.

Teresa: Again, I would—I think you would stick with that original thing. It's nannying. That's not babysitting.

Travis: No, I nannied that. But I also—I got that job because I had babysat the kids for like, nights when their parents would go out.

Teresa: Oh, okay.

Travis: And then I got the job as the nanny doing that. Um, then I also got a job for a family, uh, where I was supposed to babysit two kids and a baby, and the first day I showed up, uh, without being warned ahead of time, I was told that their friends were also there, and so there was a total of seven kids.

Teresa: [gasps]

Travis: Um, and then the next day that happened again—

Teresa: Oh, no.

Travis: —and I got very frustrated, and then I got fired.

Teresa: Well, um, I would say that that was a fortuitous circumstance, because—

Travis: Yes, I was fine. When I say I got frustrated, basically, um, the kids were... one of them was very good, and the baby was very good, and one of them was just a real pain, uh, who was really enjoying being a pain while her friend was being a pain. And I, uh, I disciplined—like, I basically like, told her that she was misbehaving, you know?

I didn't like, yell at her or anything. But I just, like, put her in time out or whatever you would call it, and she apparently told her mom, and then her mom told me not to come back. So... um, but I really do—I enjoy babysitting.

Teresa: We'll talk a little bit about that too, I guess.

Travis: Yeah. I enjoy babysitting. I—I like kids, you know? I think they're cool. I also taught a lot of like, summer camp programs, and worked in children's theater a lot, and I just enjoy children—I think children are fun, you know?

Teresa: Ours is pretty good.

Travis: Ours is pretty good. Um, in general the McElroys have gotten pretty lucky across the board. Our kids are great. So enough about us, let's talk about baby... sitting.

Teresa: Okay! So, the word "babysitter" entered—

Travis: I was about to ask! Okay, yes, go!

Teresa: [laughs] —entered the public lexicon, uh, by the Oxford English Dictionary in its 1937 edition.

Travis: Why? 'Cause you sit on babies?

Teresa: Well—

Travis: 'Cause you sit and watch the baby?

Teresa: So, probably before that, babysitting was more referred to as child rearing, or nursing or nannying, right? Because there really wasn't... there really wasn't anywhere where you would like, hire someone who wasn't just going to be yours. Like, on salary, right?

Travis: Got it. So like—okay. So, kind of like Mary Poppins.

Teresa: Yeah!

Travis: Where Mary Poppins rolls up and she's just there all the time.

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: Or Nanny McPhee. Or the nurse from Romeo and Juliet. That would a better, uh, better representation.

Teresa: Because you hired someone who became a member of your household, right?

Travis: Right.

Teresa: Um, and if you didn't hire someone, you had extended family or friends who kind of like, you all... I've heard it referred to as a babysitting co-op?

Travis: Sure.

Teresa: Um, but in general, that's the same idea where there's a group of people who are related, either by blood or by proximity, usually. Um, and they take turns watching the whole group of children that's in their care.

Travis: Gotcha.

Teresa: So—

Travis: Which is, I would say, similar to what the McElroys do whenever like, we go on family vacations or tours or stuff together, where at any given time, as long as there is [laughing] an adult, you know, it's like, "Cool, they've got it. Yes, I trust them with them, yes."

Teresa: Um, so then, the idea of babysitting is so funny, because normally when a word enters the, you know, vernacular, it starts as a verb. Babysit did not start as a verb. It started as a noun, "babysitter."

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Um, and then the verb, "babysit" and "babysitting," came later, which is just so interesting. Um, it's like—

Travis: But where does it—why is it a babysitter and not like, babywatcher, or babycarer or something? Like, why...

Teresa: Um, I wasn't able to really find out that, because the word was probably used kind of colloquially before it was actually introduced into the lexicon.

Travis: Gotcha. So like, everyone... it had become common use without it being like, "And here is why." No one created it from whole cloth to describe the thing. Okay.

Teresa: Not that I could find, but the word "babysitter" has spawned other words. "Petsitter," "housesitter," right?

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: So, those words came about after babysitter.

Travis: I have to assume it's something like, "Sit here and watch the baby."

Teresa: [laughs] Maybe.

Travis: It's gotta be that, of just like, "I just need someone to sit here and watch the baby."

Teresa: Um, and that—that is probably why I would make that distinction between babysitting and nannying. Um, because nannying is more like, caring for the child, more like... you're expected to kind of teach and rear and help them grow, whereas babysitting I feel is more like, "Just watch it, make sure it doesn't die."

Travis: Right. So I will say, like, when I nannied, right? I was a lot more of like, take the kids to the park if they wanna go, or like, drive 'em to class, you know, if they have like, some kind of like, summer class or something. And, you know, when you babysit it's like, "I just need you—I just need an adult type person in the house from like, 7 to 10." Right? And I—

Teresa: Yeah. "Just stay here, keep it safe."

Travis: Yes, correct.

Teresa: Right. Um, and this really came about, this babysitting that we think of, because of post World War II America. Um, again, we have the suburban—uh, suburb—'suburbification'?

Travis: Sure?

Teresa: Is that it?

Travis: Sure!

Teresa: Of America, where people live in the suburbs, they go in the city maybe to work, then they come home to the suburbs. Um, so the baby boomers, uh, when they were born, obviously there were lots of kids. That's why their generation is called baby boomers.

Travis: Uh-huh?

Teresa: And someone needed to watch them, so that those poor parents [laughs] could get out of the house every once in a while. Um, and—

Travis: I also have to assume that there was a rise in like, leisure, vacation and stuff then, too, right?

Teresa: Certainly.

Travis: That must've been a big part of it.

Teresa: Yeah, but you would take your kids with you on vacation most of the time.

Travis: Well, I mean, sometimes.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Sometimes.

Teresa: Uh, so then teenage girls and boys at the time found employment, easy to find in the suburbs there, watching other children. Um, and it did actually... historically, it was a job reserved for girls. Um, just because—

Travis: Probably a weird kind of gender—

Teresa: Gender roles, yeah.

Travis: —the conception of like, "Ugh, caring for is for the—the lady folk, and men don't care for babies!"

Teresa: Not just that, but like, societal norms. Men, boys, were looking for physical labor kind of jobs. Um, and girls were, you know. [sighs] Asked to stay home and do house things.

Travis: I see. Okay.

Teresa: Anyway. Even after World War II! Can you believe that? Rosie the Riveter and everything and all the women who saved the jobs—anyway. Okay, that's... [laughing] that's something for another show, I think.

Travis: You can talk about it on this show, I don't care! Go for it!

Teresa: [laughs] Okay. So, let's talk a little bit more about the babysitting and the teenage girl, in—in the context of—

Travis: You sounded like you were about to go into like, a—like, one of those scientific instructional videos that are like, [David Attenborough voice] "The teenage girl. Seen here. Look into her brain."

Teresa: While—while we—I specifically expressed the idea of gender and societal norms repressing women. At the time, it was actually considered a, um, a move towards freedom for these younger girls.

Travis: 'Cause they can get out and earn some money!

Teresa: That's right! Um, so they were getting some personal freedom, and being within the adults' expectations of them, and earning spendable... uh, what—what did we call that? Spending money.

Travis: Spending money, yeah!

Teresa: Yeah. Expendable income.

Travis: Sure.

Teresa: That's what I was looking for.

Travis: Aw, see, that's better, 'cause I was combining the two and I was gonna say "spendable income" and I knew that didn't sound right.

Teresa: [laughs] Um, it was kind of seen as like, a compromise in a way, because it kept the girls in their place, which is the home, right? 1950s, is their home. But it also meant leaving them alone in a position of authority, so six of one, half a dozen of the other.

Um, in the 60s, what then started to happen was the portrayal of babysitters in the media as sex objects.

Travis: Oh, no!

Teresa: Yeah... well, I mean—so the idea that they were kind of... they were portrayed in the media as usually white, middle class teenagers. Um, some of them, like, would find that the teenagers were always kind of like... [sighs] I guess there's two tropes. So there's the teenager who is like, sweet and innocent—

Travis: Uh-huh.

Teresa: Right? Comes to babysit, doesn't know what she's gotten herself into. And then the other trope is the babysitter who is, like, a world—who is worldly, and educates the children in the ways of the world.

Travis: Uh-huh.

Teresa: Do you know what I mean?

Travis: Yeah?

Teresa: And in either way, you can kind of find the objectification of this role.

Travis: Sure.

Teresa: You're looking at me a little incredulously.

Travis: No, I—no, this is one of those things where I... listen, Shmanners is a very PG show, and I'm trying to think of the proper term—'cause I—I had the term "coquettish" pop in my head, but I'm not sure, uh, what it means. [laughs]

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: I can't—I can't decide which of those two coquettish applies to. Coquettish is like, flirty and—

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: Right?

Teresa: I think that that might be—it might apply to the worldly babysitter.

Travis: Right. Well, because—I mean, listen. This isn't the 60s, mind you, it's the 80s, but when you think about like, Adventures in Babysitting, right?

Teresa: Right.

Travis: You have this babysitter who rolls up and they get involved in all these shenani—right? Like, and then I think—I think you're right that like, there's two... you are right. Uh, two kind of film tropes, right? Of the like, babysitter—the like, hands on head, "Oh, no! These kids!" Right? And then there's also the like, "Turns out she's an influence." or whatever. And then I—but what I was thinking of, the reason I had a weird look on my face when you looked over is how that connects to like, the sexualization of like, "The babysitter, ooh!" And it's just—it all applies, it's just all weird.

Teresa: [laughs] Yes. Also starting in the 60s up to the present day we now have training programs that are offered to people who want to babysit.

Travis: Like CPR and first aid and juggling—

Teresa: Yes, absolutely, and a little more than that. So, the Red Cross—

Travis: I said juggling and you didn't hear it, 'cause I was like, setting up like, "First aid, and CPR, and juggling." And you were gonna be like, "Juggling?" But you didn't hear me say it.

Teresa: Ooh, I was—I finished your sentence in my mind—

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: —with like—

Travis: You thought I was gonna say something like, intelligent.

Teresa: No, I thought you were gonna say some—like, juggling expectations, or something like that.

Travis: Oh, no. Just juggling.

Teresa: Just juggling.

Travis: Just like juggling apples, or maybe chainsaws.

Teresa: So the Red Cross... it varies a little bit, but typically the training courses for youth ages 11 to 15, um, and in that, not only do they learn about first aid and CPR, but they also—

Travis: But they learn about life.

Teresa: [laughs] They learn how to respond to emergencies and to care for themselves when home alone.

Travis: Which is good! Those are—listen. Even—if you have children, if you are a young person, even if you don't intend to go into any kind of childcare profession, those are good things to know. Take those classes. I did, they're great.

Teresa: And the last part of the course is, should you decide to offer services as a babysitter, it teaches them how to promote their services.

Travis: There you go!

Teresa: Uh, it's about 8 hours. Um—

Travis: Oh, never mind. [laughs]

Teresa: Well, so it doesn't take place over one day.

Travis: Oh, okay, great, great, great.

Teresa: It's usually a week of evening classes. Um, same thing with the YMCA. They offer their own, um, and it's very similar to the Red Cross programming. Um, and one of the things that the YMCA really includes is explaining the latest childcare tactics and theories. Um, I really wish that I had taken both courses. I did take, when I was in Girl Scouts, we took the babysitting course. And they taught things like how to change a diaper, never warm a bottle in the microwave—

Travis: Yeah, but not a lot of like, child psychology.

Teresa: Right.

Travis: Yeah. Behavioral stuff.

Teresa: Right. Uh, they said, you know, never hit children, obvs.

Travis: Yes. Don't shake a baby.

Teresa: Don't shake a baby, um, and time-outs are the discipline of choice. Things like that. Always have the parent's number available, stuff like that.

Travis: But I—but I will also say, like, so I—I took some child psychology classes in college, and that was very informative and all well and good and highly recommend it. But, I will say that when it comes to dealing with kids, I think you learn way more by doing.

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: I am a—I am a by interacting learner, and like, between nannying and babysitting and working with kids in various different, you know, classes and stuff, and then having our own kid, [laughing] I feel like I am just now beginning to understand kids.

Teresa: [laughs] Well, so I, um—I took a look through the Red Cross, um, the book that they offer for babysitting. It is quite long, but it is free, available online. Um, and they went over things about like, how to make sure a home environment is safe, and a lot of really physical things, but I wasn't able to locate the, um, YMCA one. Maybe it's proprietary information, I'm not sure.

Travis: Ooh.

Teresa: Um, but I would be interested in seeing some of those. I don't know, again, how much child kind of interaction I would lump into actual babysitting. Because, like I talked about earlier, I feel like the distinction between like, nannying and babysitting, has to do with like, one, how much the kids are asleep—'cause I think about babysitting as like, being an evening thing where basically either the kids are already in bed and you are just paid to sit in the house and make sure that nothing happens, um, or that it's like, dinner and bedtime. You know?

Travis: I mean, it's possible to—I would also say that it gets a little bit semantic, because like, you could ask somebody to come over and babysit from to 2 PM to 5 PM while you ran errands. I mean, I—

Teresa: I mean, I guess so.

Travis: I think that when it comes down to it, if you're babysitting, ask the kid what they want to play, what they want to play with, do that with them, you know what I mean? And—and keep the conversation light. [laughs]

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Um, and if you're nannying, I think by that point you have a better idea of like, what is the norm and what the schedule is. You know what? We'll get to advice questions and stuff here in a second, but first, how about a thank you note to our sponsor?

[theme music plays]

Teresa: This week's sponsor is ModCloth! At ModCloth, there is no such thing as an ordinary outfit. These clothes are crafted by a team of in house designers, and their signature styles include hand drawn prints, standout silhouettes, and an inclusive size range that celebrates all women.

Travis: Yeah!

Teresa: So I love—

Travis: Take that, women! [laughs]

Teresa: [laughs] I love shopping at ModCloth, um, and I'm very excited. I just got a new catalog for their spring collection, very nice. I am excited to fill my closet with florals and summer stripes and pastels and—

Travis: It is very pretty. Bebe and I were enjoying looking through it as well. Our two year old also enjoys the catalog.

Teresa: Yeah! Um, and the thing I really like about ModCloth's website specifically is you can search by kind of style feel. So I usually head straight to that vintage style tab. I love shopping those. I love the beautiful cuts of the dresses, and—oh, I could just go on and on.

Um, and it's really great because I can't always find something that I feel would look right on me, um, because I have a hard time negotiating between... I am a, quote, "plus size woman," so I have a hard time negotiating between, "Should I get this in a large or an extra large? What's the difference between their 2X and

their—" all of that stuff. Don't have to worry about on ModCloth. They have some really great, uh, sizing help. Um, and they carry sizes between 00 and size 28, which is pretty good!

Travis: So, you can get 15% off your purchase of \$100 or more, if you go to Modcloth.com, that's Modcloth.com, and enter the code "shmanners" at checkout. Uh, that's 15% off your first purchase of \$100 or more, at Modcloth.com. Enter the code "shmanners." This offer is valid for one time only, and expires on July 6th, 2019, so go! Do it! Now!

Jill: Hi, I'm Jill Firestone!

Manolo: And I'm Manolo Moreno.

Jill: And we're the hosts of Dr. Gameshow, which is a podcast where we play games submitted by listeners, regardless of quality or content, with in-studio guests, and callers from all over the world!

Manolo: You could win a custom magnet.

Jill: A custom magnet!

Manolo: Subscribe now to make sure you get our next episode.

Jill: What's an example of a game, Manolo?

Manolo: Pokemon or medication.

Jill: How do you play that?

Manolo: You have to guess if something's a Pokemon name or a—

Jill: Or medi—

Manolo: —medication.

Jill: —medication?

Manolo: First time listener, if you want to listen to episode highlights and also know how to participate, follow Dr. Gameshow on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

Jill: We'd love to hear from you!

Manolo: Yeah, it's really fun.

Jill: For the whole family! We'll be every other Wednesday, starting March 13th, and we're coming to Max Fun!

Manolo: Snorlax.

Jill: Pokemon?

Manolo: Yes.

Jill: Nice!

[music plays]

Allie: Hi, I'm Allie Goertz.

Julia: And I'm Julia Prescott, and we're the hosts of...

Together: Everything's Coming Up Simpsons!

Julia: Every episode we cover a different episode of The Simpsons that is a favorite of our special guest.

Allie: We've had guests that are show runners and writers and voice actors, like Nancy Cartwright.

Nancy Cartwright: [Bart voice] I got a D minus! I passed!

Allie: And we've also had people that are on the Max Fun network already.

Julia: We've had Weird Al Yankovich on the show.

Weird Al Yankovich: I was just struck by how sharp the writing is. I mean, that's no surprise, 'cause it's The Simpsons, but I mean like, you can't say that about a lot of TV shows, particularly ones that at that point had been on the air for 14 years.

Allie: Find us on Maximumfun.org, iTunes, or wherever you get your podcasts.

Julia: All right, smell ya later!

[music plays]

Travis: Okay. We've got some questions.

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: Uh, this is from Kayla.

"Is it all right to fall asleep if the parents won't be back until 1 to 2 AM?"

Teresa: I would say... that—well, I mean, 1 to 2 AM? Yeah. I think it's okay to sleep.

Travis: Yeah I would say that's pretty—

Teresa: I wouldn't like... I would sleep on the couch in the front room, um, I wouldn't—

Travis: Especially if there's some kind of monitor—

Teresa: Oh yeah.

Travis: —like a baby monitor or whatever, make sure you have that monitor near you.

Teresa: Right. Um, I wouldn't make myself at home in their bed. [laughs]

Travis: No. Look—here's the thing. So, in my experience, both now as a parent and as a babysitter, the answer to a lot of these questions is going to boil down to setting expectations.

Teresa: Certainly.

Travis: Right? I think if the parents tell you they won't be back until like, 2 AM, and the baby goes to sleep at like, 9 or 8, I think it's all right to say, "Is it all right with you if I snooze on the couch then, with the monitor next to me until you get home?" Right? Because... and, you know, they'll say yes or they'll say no or whatever, but it's something of like, if I didn't know that was happening and I came home and the person was asleep, it might be like, "Oh, okay, cool." But I'd go to sleep then.

Teresa: Yeah!

Travis: You know? It's not like I'm staying up til 2 AM staring at the baby monitor making sure they're okay. So I'm sure it's fine.

Teresa: I suppose you are then paying the babysitter to sleep.

Travis: Well, but also, to be in the house with the monitor in case the baby wakes up and needs you.

Teresa: Yes, yes. I think that that's a good idea. Maybe just knowing the right questions to ask is what you really need to do, and it's not about like, the specific kind of 1 AM, 2 AM, 4 AM thing, it's about... if someone is going to be—if they're going to be coming home past your own bedtime, you should ask.

Travis: Because my bet would be, if they're not coming home until 2 AM, they don't expect you to just be sitting there, like, staring at the monitor in silence—

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: —waiting for some—like, I'm sure they'll understand. But I also think they will really appreciate you asking.

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: I mean, that's the other thing is at a certain point... this is different than a lot of the subjects we cover, 'cause a lot of the subjects we cover are very, like, social. Um, and while babysitting can often be like, for friends or for family or whatever, this is—it's a business, you know what I mean?

Teresa: Right.

Travis: And it's—it's a service that you're providing, and so making sure that your customers, the parents or the caretakers, are happy, that's good business. You know what I mean? So I think asking and making sure everyone knows what the plan is is good business.

Uh, along those same lines, Ashton asks:

"What do you think the standard price quote per hour per kid should be?"

Um, and to connect that, Gertie Vintage asks:

"Whenever I babysit, I usually just hope for money. I never set a standard price, and I feel awkward establishing one. How should I go about it?"

Teresa: Okay. So, I'm gonna answer the second question first.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Your time is worth being paid for.

Travis: Yes, correct.

Teresa: So, um, you don't need to feel awkward. They are expecting to pay you.

Travis: And if they aren't, you don't wanna work for them.

Teresa: So I think that it is important that you do set some rates. And what I would normally do—what I did when I was babysitting is, for the first child, I asked for one fee, and every additional child, I tacked on like, a half-price fee, right?

Travis: Right, 'cause you're already gonna be there.

Teresa: Exactly.

Travis: It's already your time, yeah.

Teresa: Um, but here's the thing. Babysitting rates are highly regional.

Travis: Not only that, I would say very specific—like, if you're watching a one year old who's just gonna lay in the crib, versus a four year old, versus an eight year old...

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: Like, it's a big span of time. Or a big span of price, I would say.

Teresa: And what you really need to do is find out comparable services in your area, and charge what you feel comfortable from there, according to... like I said, if you have any special certifications, you can charge a little more. If you have a lot of experience you can charge a little more. Um, but you ask for a different fee if you're babysitting in Manhattan than you do if you're babysitting in... I don't know, like, Indiana, right?

Travis: Right. I would also say that... so, to answer kind of both questions, if this is something that you do, like, professionally, um, you know, like this is your job, right? Not just like, something someone asked you do once, but like, something—I think, develop a set of questions to ask the person, and tell them that you need those questions answered so that you can give them a quote.

Teresa: Like a survey, yeah.

Travis: Right. So that way you can say like, you know, "Does the child have any health concerns? What time is bedtime? You know, any behavioral concerns I need to know about?" Whatever, whatever you wanna say. "How old is the kid? How many kids will be there? Dietary restrictions I need to be aware of?"

Anything that like, the more... because that's the thing. If it's like, no, here's a super easygoing four year old, right? And here is a kid that every four hours—or every like, hour, needs... I don't know, an injection of insulin or something, right? Like, that's a different—

Teresa: Those are two different...

Travis: There are factors, right? There are factors that go into what I think you should quote, and then that also establishes, like, "You will be paying me money."

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: "There will be a quote." And—and here's the other thing, and this holds true of so many things. Say what your rate is as a statement, and not a question. Like, if you're gonna charge \$15 an hour, right? Say, "My rate is \$15 an hour, so for three hours, that would be \$45." Right? Instead of, "Well, my rate is \$15 an hour. Is that okay? Is that—does that sound right? What do you think?" Any of those things. Like, know what your time is worth, and then say what your time is worth, and leave it up to them if that doesn't work. You know?

If you say, "It's \$15 an hour." And they say like, "Oh, well, you know, I was kind of planning on \$10 an hour." Then, you know, you might be able to say like, "Well, for this first time, we can set it at \$10 an hour, and then if we're happy with how it goes, after that it will be \$15 an hour." Right? Whatever you wanna do.

Teresa: Or, I have heard of some, uh, some caregivers asking for a different rate for awake children versus asleep children.

Travis: Yes, right. But that's the thing, is know what your time is worth, and tell them what your time is worth, instead of asking what they think your time is worth. 'Cause that's the other thing. A lot of people, if they ask me, like, "Well, what—what would you offer?" I'd be like, "I don't even know where to begin."
[laughs]

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: "Like, I don't know! Uh... five bucks? A hundred bucks. Somewhere—what—what do you think?"

Teresa: [laughs] Somewhere between those. Um, like I said, really do some research in your area. Ask your friends, ask Facebook, things like that, so that you can, you know, be a reasonable amount within your community.

Travis: Um, Anna asks:

"Is it still babysitting if it's family? I mean like, older kids taking care of their baby niece or something."

And I would say yeah!

Teresa: I mean, yeah. I would say it's still babysitting. I don't know if I would... I never got paid to babysit my younger sister, but what I did get was leverage, right?

Travis: Sure.

Teresa: So, I got things like... "Okay, well, I've been babysitting Elizabeth for five hours now. I would like—since you are home, I would like to go and have dinner with my friends tonight instead of with the family."

And then my mom would be like, "Well, I mean, you did do me some really great favors. Okay, go ahead."

Travis: I think that that makes total sense, but I also think my... this is where it gets really, really subjective, but like, if you're talking about like, an older... like, a, you know, an older kid taking care of like, a baby niece or something, I think that is like, you're taking time out of your life to go do it. That's a job.

If it's like, "Hey, uh, you're 17 and I want you to keep an eye on your 14 year old brother while I'm gone," right? You're both gonna be in the house anyways, you were both gonna be doing it anyways, you're now just a little bit more responsible than you were when the parent was there. That feels just like family watching out for family, you know what I mean? And like, I don't know that there's a hard and fast rule there, so much as it's like, "Hey, like, you usually go out on Friday nights, but don't go out this Friday night 'cause I need you to watch your brother." That feels like a job. You know what I mean?

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Like, that's the thing. I think if you are giving—

Teresa: Well, here are some more kind of parameters, right? Do they live with you? And do—are you expected to provide your own transportation? Because a lot of babysitters are too young to drive. Um, and then like, are you gonna get fed? Is it like a dinner thing, where they're making extra food for you? Um, and like, how well do you know this family? Is this something where it's like, tit for tat, I'll scratch your back, you scratch mine.

Travis: Right, that's what I'm saying, if it's like... if it's like—you know. If my parents had asked me to keep an eye on Griffin when they were gone, I wouldn't be like, "All right, let's talk terms!" You know?

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: It's like, of course, yeah, it's my little brother. But if someone had called me and said like, "Hey, can you come watch, you know, your two year—"

Teresa: Rileigh.

Travis: Yeah, Rileigh, who is what, like, 12, 13 years younger than me? More than that, actually.

Teresa: I thought you were gonna say "Who's like, 12 or 13." [laughs]

Travis: No, no, no. I'm just thinking about, she's at least 17 years younger than me, right?

Teresa: I think so.

Travis: So if when I was like, 19, and they were like, "Come watch two year old Rileigh," I'd be like, "O—okay, well, let's talk terms." [laughs] You know? But I—I think that there's a certain amount of like, is it an inconvenience, and how much responsibility are we really talking, you know?

Teresa: Right.

Travis: That would be my—but I'm also... pretty cold-blooded.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Um, this is—let's see. This is from, uh—

Teresa: You know that if you went to go babysit Rileigh, Mary would not only feed you, she would probably also, like... I don't know, like... if you were 19, I wouldn't say that she would offer you booze, because you were underage—

Travis: But probably just give me a present. She's very nice.

Teresa: She would definitely give you presents. Like, you would—you may not get—

Travis: I might get a slinky out of the deal.

Teresa: You may not get money out of Mary Smirl, but she would definitely...

Travis: Probably brownies.

Teresa: [laughs] Compensate you.

Travis: So this is from, uh, Kokiri, and I'm sorry if I mispronounced that, but:

"What are the conditions vis a vis fridge liberties?"

Teresa: Okay. Um, this is something that I looked up specifically, because a lot of people, when they hire sitters, they say, "Help yourself to anything in the fridge." What that really means is, "You are allowed to eat a few things, but don't finish something, and if it looks like it hasn't been opened yet, don't open it."

Travis: Yeah. And you know what? Here's the thing. What I did is, if I was given that instruction, before the person left I would look in the fridge and say, "Is it okay if I eat this thing?"

Teresa: Perfect.

Travis: Right? And so that way, once again, establish expectations. Because you don't want is them coming home and being like, "That was a \$300 cheese that I was s—" or whatever.

Teresa: Right.

Travis: Don't eat the \$300 cheese.

Teresa: No-no-no. Um, it's a safe bet if you eat what you are serving the children. So if you order a pizza, you can definitely eat some of that. You make a pot of macaroni, again, you can some of that. Feed the children first, obviously.

Travis: Yeah. Eat in front of them, let them know that you're in charge.

Teresa: Things like handheld fruits, like bananas, apples, oranges, pears, things like that, are usually fair game. Also, if it is one of many in a package like cheese sticks, right? Like the string cheese. As long as there are some left and you didn't open the package, you can have a cheese string, or you can have, like, crackers or pretzels or chips that are open, but don't finish them.

Travis: I would say stay away from something like, um, you know, if there's like... a steak? Or, you know, certain special vegetables or whatever, like, that is something I wouldn't be like, "Oh, I'm gonna fry up these chicken breasts that are sitting—"

Teresa: Right, yeah. No, don't do that.

Travis: They probably bought those specifically for a meal.

Teresa: I read a blog, uh, which was different reasons why parents fired babysitters, and one of the reasons for the firing, um, was that the babysitter ate the top of a lasagna. So just like, the cheese layer on the top of a lasagna that was in the fridge. I would have been like, "What—who does that?"

Travis: "Why would you do this?"

Teresa: "Why would you do that?" Don't do that. Don't do that kind of stuff. But like I said, um, you're usually safe with kid food, whether it's like, packed lunches, cheese, little bags of chips or things like that, and then I think you had a great idea, to ask before you dig in.

Travis: Um, one last question here. This is from Jesse.

"What's the appropriate etiquette for disciplining children you are babysitting? Do you need to tell the parents before you do it, or just report after, if nothing was agreed on beforehand?"

Teresa: If nothing was agreed on beforehand, um, time outs are always a good idea. Um, I would say don't send children to their room for time out, because you can't see them then. [laughs] Uh, so time out in front of you, and, you know, just make yourself as boring as possible. Um, and then make sure that you write down immediately what happened.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: All the steps. "Junior did this. I said this. Junior continued. I put Junior in a time out for two minutes."

Travis: Right. I also think, um... I know you clarified this in the question, Jesse, but I think if at all possible, do everything in your power to talk to the parents beforehand and say, "What is your method of disciplining?" You know? Because it varies—not just because you want to be consistent with what the parents are doing, but also because like, for example, we tried to do like, naughty step time out—

Teresa: Yeah. Doesn't work for Bebe.

Travis: And it is ineffective, right? Like, Bebe just thinks it's a fun game. Doesn't work.

Teresa: She does not care.

Travis: And so like, knowing that kind of thing will save you a lot of trouble. And, you know, I think in general the thing that makes babysitting successful and easy for both you and the kid is... you know, parents, caregivers, people who are taking care of kids, they fall into a certain rhythm and a certain, uh, pattern, structure, schedule with the kid, right?

And a lot of the times, parents and caregivers—I keep saying parents, but whoever is in charge of the child, may take for granted that schedule, and then you step in as a babysitter and you don't know it, then that can really throw you off. Um, so making sure that you ask lots of questions and know like, "Okay, what do I do if the kid doesn't wanna eat this food?" Right? And then it's like, "Would you like me to make them sit there until they eat it? Offer them something else? What's the procedure?"

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: Right? Because that's something that everybody does differently.

Teresa: And I think that that, again, is another distinction between nannying and babysitting, where babysitting I think you're walking into something a little more blind than you would as a nanny, especially since you'd be with the child to develop these kind of things. Where like, "Okay, when you are with Grandma is

different from when you are with me as a babysitter. Maybe Grandma can make you five different meals, but me as a babysitter, this is what your mom and dad said that you have to eat."

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: So like, that's the kind of thing. You can make a distinguish between...

Travis: Um, so that's gonna do it for us. Thank you so much for listening. Uh, thank you to... uh, I don't know, to Teresa! Hey, thanks, Teresa!

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: You did great!

Teresa: Thank you, you did great, too.

Travis: Thank you Ma—

Teresa: But let's thank Max Fun, I think.

Travis: Maximum Fun, yes. Thank you Maximumfun.org, home to our podcast and so many other amazing podcasts. Uh, also, thank you, if we haven't said it before, to San Jose and Salt Lake City.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: Um, we just did two great shows there. Um... well, Shmanners did, yes.

Teresa: And we very much enjoyed your mall, Salt Lake City.

Travis: We did! What a great mall, City Creek Center!

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: And—and San Jose, we enjoyed your Mystery House.

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: Um, and if you didn't see on... we just announced all the live shows coming up for My Brother, My Brother, and Me, and Adventure Zone. I imagine, uh, Shmanners will be at a lot of those My Brother, My Brother, and Me shows, but we don't know for sure yet. Uh, but that usually happens. But don't plan on it! But hope for it.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Uh, you can find that at McElroy.family, and you can see all of our shows there, all of our merch there, all that stuff. McElroy.family, click on "tours" if you wanna see where those shows are gonna be. Uh, they go on sale Friday at noon eastern. Um, let's see. What else, Teresa?

Teresa: Well, we always thank Brent "brentalfloss" Black for writing our theme music, which is available as a ringtone where those are found. Thank you to Kayla M. Wasil for our Twitter thumbnail art. Check out their portfolio. Also, thank you to Keely Weis Photography for the cover picture of our fan run Facebook group, which you can join. It's called Shmanners Fanners. Lots of people givin' and gettin' great advice.

Um, also, follow us on Twitter, @shmannerscast. We also always take fan submissions into account, so please send your show ideas to shmannerscast@gmail.com.

Travis: And that's gonna do it for us. Join us again next week!

Teresa: No RSVP required.

Travis: You've been listening to Shmanners...

Teresa: Manners, Shmanners! Get it?

[theme music plays]

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