

Shmanners 164: Ask Shmanners

Published May 16, 2019

[Listen here on themcelroy.family](https://themcelroy.family)

[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 doing well, feeling fine and rested. Had a lovely birthday weekend.

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: 34! Woot-woot!

Travis: Woo! Birthday and Mother's Day.

Teresa: Yeah. You know, a couple times in my life they've actually fallen on the same day, but this is the first year they have been so close together and I've actually celebrated both!

Travis: Yeah, it was great. We had a nice, relaxing weekend, spent a lot of great family time, um, back to back with then going straight from that, traveling to... Well, I am, to Cleveland, and then, uh, we'll be doing the live show in Cleveland, and then back here to Cincinnati, and then I'm going to LA. this weekend to do a live DnD stream, which—

Teresa: So I hope you feel rested up for all your travelin'.

Travis: I do. If you want to watch me and Dad do some livestream DnD with Wizards of the Coast on Friday, uh, just pay attention to my twitter. It'll be on there, @travismcelroy. Also, I think, #DnDlive2019.

Um, but with all that going on, we coulda skipped a week. Sure! Sure, we could've, but we wouldn't, 'cause we love you. We— well, we just—

Teresa: Now wait a second.

Travis: Uh-huh?

Teresa: That makes it sound like if we ever do skip a week, it's because we don't love them.

Travis: Oh no! No, we just didn't want to skip a week. So! We thought it's been a while. It's been since, like, December since we did an Ask Shmanners.

Teresa: So here we are!

Travis: Yeah! So, on Ask Shmanners—

Teresa: You're asking us.

Travis: If you're new, Ask Shmanners is, people have a lot of questions and sometimes those questions, uh, are of topics or are so specific that it's not really, like, a whole episode's worth, but still, they are very much worth answering, so we want to make sure they get answered. So let's start with—

Teresa: The best way to submit questions, by the way, uh, is when we do a call for questions on Twitter. That's how we get these questions, um, but if you have a topic suggestion, something we could do an entire episode on, that is where we would request that you send them to our email.

Travis: Yes. Shmannerscast.

Teresa: Shmannerscast@gmail.com.

Travis: Uh, this is from Chisken Nouget. Okay. I get it, because it sounds like chicken nugget. Anyways: "What do you when you're meeting someone you've considered a huge role model since you were little, like, how not to freak out?"

Teresa: Um, this is something that... Well, I mean, I have experienced lately. As podcasting comes more into the mainstream, we are often afforded opportunities to meet people that we admire as well.

Travis: Yes. I've gotten to meet some of my heroes, which is very nice.

Teresa: Which is very cool. I remember feeling this way when I got to meet Adam Savage, because I watched MythBusters for a very long time. He's a very charismatic personality, um, and the thing was, as soon as I remembered that Adam was a person too, I was like, "Oh, he's a person. I know how to talk to people. Um, I can still comment on their work and say that I enjoyed the TV show and maybe ask one or two questions about that experience."

But after that, like, we talked about our kids, and he talked about the tour that he was on at the moment, and I was like, "Oh, I understand how that goes." And finding things to relate to someone with as far as, like, peoplehood goes, is always the best way to calm your nerves and, you know, just have a good time without making things too much about those anxious feelings.

Travis: I have found that whenever I have gotten to meet role models or people I'm a fan of or however, there's usually two circumstances under which it occurs. Circumstance One: it is, like, a meeting in passing, or at, like, a signing or handshake line, something like that. And Option Two: is it is, like, we are at a party together or—

Teresa: And a friend of a friend type thing.

Travis: Or friend of a friend, right. So I would say that if you find yourself in circumstance number one, um, at that point what... At least, here's what I do. I'll give you what I personally do, and you can choose to take that advice or not, because that's how Shmammers works.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Um, my personal goal is to have a moment with them, but not try to force some kind of best friend connection. Like, you know, if I got to... I happen

to be in the same room waiting for a signing thing to happen as Catherine Tate, who played Donna on Doctor Who, who I'm a big fan of, and rather than be like, "Alright. I'm gonna pop down and talk to her forever and try to make her my friend," I just said, like, "I'm a big fan of your work, thank you so much for the great work that you've done. Can I get a picture? Thank you!" Done. Right? That's it!

Teresa: Well, this goes back to your, um—

Travis: Three step plan.

Teresa: Your three step plan.

Travis: The approach, the ask, and the departure.

Teresa: That's right.

Travis: "Excuse me, I hate to bother you. I just wanted to tell you I'm a big fan. Could I grab a picture?" That's the ask. "Okay, thank you so much. Have a great day!" Depart. Right? That's it, right? You just want to make some... But not, like...

And you know what, I've had many wonderful people come up to me... Not that I'm on any level of either Adam Savage or Catherine Tate, but come up to me and tell me something personal, some kind of personal impact our work has had on them, something like that. I love that. That's great.

But, I wouldn't stand in, like, a meet and greet line and be like, "I'm gonna talk to this person for 45 minutes." Like, that's not really a good time for that.

Teresa: Right. You have to consider the circumstance as well.

Travis: Right. And then if I find myself in circumstance two, where I'm at a party or a friend of a friend, that's where I really try hard to think of that person as a person, of like, "Yeah, this is a great party, isn't it? What are you out here working on? Oh, that's great! Oh, yeah, what have you been up to? Oh yeah, I saw that. That's great!"

Like, that kind of thing. And if it comes up that you're a big fan of their work, um, absolutely. Like, I've never had anyone be weirded out by that. I think it would be

weirder if you met, like, Harrison Ford, and tried to pretend like you didn't know who Harrison Ford was.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: And you're like, "A star wars? Hmm, interesting! Tell me more!" Um, but I do think it's one thing to be a fan, and another to be, like, trying to be deferential to them, or, you know, like, falling— bowing before them or whatever. Like, you don't need to do that. I think just treat them as a person.

But once again, in all of this, in both circumstances, the key is to also kind of... As much as you can and as much as you are personally able to, read kind of body language and context clues of, like... You know, if they start scanning around the room or they start to someone else, "Okay, thank you. Oh, it was great meeting you." And move on.

Teresa: So here are some physical things that you can do to help ease anxiety over meeting people.

One: Make sure you breathe, because when you hold your breath, things start to get... They start to feel a lot more dire than they actually are.

Second: Don't lock your knees.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Because that also contributes to the flight or fight response, and you'll find that you are becoming lightheaded at that point.

Travis: Which, when you're lightheaded, not great decision making.

Teresa: Right. Um, also, put something in your hands.

Travis: Mm-hmm.

Teresa: Whether it's holding on to your purse—

Travis: Maybe not an alcoholic drink, though.

Teresa: Right, right, right.

Travis: Because you don't want to get a little... But yes.

Teresa: Right.

Travis: Because that was the mistake I used to make in my younger years.

Teresa: Oh, water would be fine.

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: But you can also put your hands in your pockets. You can hold onto your phone, or a purse if you have that. Uh, a jacket, something so that your hands are not gesturing wildly or shaking, because that's another thing that you will probably notice about yourself that the person you are meeting probably won't notice.

If you are shaky, you're holding onto something. That gives you an anchor point, and then you're not worried about, "Oh my gosh, my hands are sweaty, I'm shaking," like, all that stuff, because they're occupied.

Travis: I will also say, here's a psychological tip rather than a physical. Don't internalize too much. This is a mistake that I've made before, when I see someone across the room that I'm, like, a big fan of, is I'll start in my head to try to think about what I'm gonna say to them or, like, start to convince myself that, like, this is my one chance ever to go talk to them.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: And, like, as you do that, you're gonna start to, like, psych yourself up or psych yourself out, and either way, you're either gonna talk yourself out talking to them or get so anxious about it that you're gonna make yourself nervous. Like, wait for the opportunity, and then just talk to them.

Question Two: This is from Cody. "Complimenting a stranger: Do's and Don't's."

Teresa: Okay. Um, we talked about this a little bit before in the Compliments show. I think that it's always safe if you... If you feel moved to compliment someone that you don't know, keep it physical and not about their body.

Travis: Right.

Teresa: Okay? So, "I like your—"

Travis: So make it about a material possession.

Teresa: Like a material possession. "I like your purse."

Travis: "That's a great shirt."

Teresa: "Those are awesome shoes. Where did you get them?"

Travis: Right.

Teresa: Something like that. So a physical trait that is not their body. Um, I would stay away from hair.

Travis: I would say— yeah.

Teresa: Unless it's about the color, right?

Travis: Yes, yes, that's what I was gonna say. Because I love when people compliment my purple hair.

Teresa: Right.

Travis: Because, like, I made my hair purple. I wanted to get noticed, please, yes and thank you.

Teresa: Yes, but it is... It makes one uncomfortable to find that people are staring at your body.

Travis: Mm-hmm.

Teresa: So like I said, make it about something physical that isn't their body.

Travis: I would also say, and I think we talked about this in the compliments episode too, but it is not... A compliment should be given without any expectation.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: So if you are trying to come up with a compliment to start a conversation, then I think that really breaks the nature of a compliment. I think you should be, like, "That's a great shirt."

"Thank you!"

And then walk away, right?

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: Like, you're not trying... You're not hoping to get anything out of it. I think a compliment should be given purely because you were moved to tell them how much you enjoy their jacket, right?

Teresa: Or, something that I find very wonderful when it happens to me, is a comment of solidarity, right? So like, if I am struggling with getting Bebe to put her jacket on or something at a play area. When another caregiver says to me, "Hey, I've been there. You're doing a great job."

Travis: Right.

Teresa: That makes me feel great. It makes me feel like the people around me aren't judging me, or they're at least commiserating with me. So something like that, I think, is great.

I've done that in airports, where I see someone trying to wrangle children and I would say something to that effect, like "I've been there, man, you're doing great. Keep up the good work."

Travis: See, and I think that fits there, too, where you're giving them a compliment and you're not asking for anything in return. You know what I mean?

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: I think that's the key, is like, if someone said to me, "That's a great shirt!"

"Aw, thank you very much!"

But if they said, "Hey, we both have great shirts!" That would be weird. You know what I mean? Or come up and say, "That's a great shirt!" And then stand there, like, looking me in the face, like, "Now we're friends." and you're like, "Whoa!"

Let's see. This is from Theo. "If I'm an entertainer, actor/author/broadcaster etc, how does business attire change based on what my business is?"

Teresa: Okay. When it comes to, like, business, business casual, formal, all those things, they don't really matter as far as your personal experience, because it is a set dress code, basically. If something is business attire, the attire is expected that you dress like a business person.

Travis: Yes. Like the general ideal of a business person.

Teresa: Like the generalness of business. Not your business, because if you're a podcaster like Travis, you might wear MeUndies sleep pants—

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: And an A line T-shirt.

Travis: Oh, I just got some new ones that are lightsabers. Oh! Oh, MeUndies isn't even sponsoring this episode! The pants are just so cool.

Teresa: So that's what he wears to podcast a lot.

Travis: Not a lot! [laughs] Not a lot!

Teresa: That is his business attire.

Travis: Also, a lot of Stitch Fix.

Teresa: A lot of Stitch Fix as well, but if you are asked to wear business attire, dress like a business person. So we're thinking collared shirt, nice slacks, close toed shoes, maybe a little—

Travis: No denim.

Teresa: No denim.

Travis: Maybe even, like, a sport coat.

Teresa: Perhaps, yes. Or something... I think that collared is a good idea. A collared shirt, for sure.

Travis: Yeah. Uh, this is from Steve. "I'm a cannabis home delivery driver, and since it's kind of a brand new idea that such a thing even exists, I often have customers asking me, 'Should I tip you?' Is there an answer I can give them that will still get me some sweet gas money without sounding awful?"

Teresa: Well, hmm. I mean, I would think of it kind of generally like a delivery driver. If it's something where I have to exchange money for goods, so, like, not maybe an Amazon delivery driver, because that's almost like a postal service, but, like, a pizza delivery driver, I would tip them.

Travis: I think the answer you can give here that I have been given whenever I find myself in a position where I don't know if I'm supposed to tip someone or not, I always appreciate being told, "Customarily, a customer might tip 20%." Or "Some customers do." Rather than saying, "You should," say "Customers do," or "It's customary, yes." Right?

So that way you're not saying, "I would like money," or "Yes you should," because if I say, "Should I tip you?" and you say, "Yes, you should," then I feel dumb for not knowing it and like maybe I've offended you. But if you say, "Customarily, yes," then that feels like, yeah, you know what? It's encouraged but not required if you don't feel like it.

Teresa: If you're part of, uh... A business group, I want to say? So like, this isn't you, um, you making the cannabis products and hand delivering them. You're part of a... What do I want to say?

Travis: A process?

Teresa: A pro— I don't know. You can say—

Travis: The farm to table cannabis delivery.

Teresa: [laughs] Yes?

Travis: Yeah?

Teresa: So what you could say is, "Our clients tip for excellent service."

Travis: Oh, see, that's good too! Yeah. I think anything that makes it clear that... I mean, you could even say, "It's encouraged, but not required." Right? Whatever you want to say, because I think the "No" answer would be, like, "It's not necessary, but thank you." Right?

Teresa: Yes, that makes it sound like you don't expect tips. But as a delivery driver, I would expect to tip.

Travis: But I think rather than you saying, like, "I expect you to," which maybe [laughs] might be taken the— I think "It's encouraged, but not required," or "Customarily, yes," anything that's like, "Sure." You know? Because, like, what— I think it makes people feel more comfortable than being told, "Yes, you have to." Right?

Teresa: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm.

Travis: And I think nine times out of ten, if you tell people it's encouraged or appreciated or whatever language you want to use, they then will.

Teresa: Right.

Travis: This is from... Bun Bunnan. Bunbunnan. Sure. "If you have time, cosplay etiquette would be a topic I'd love to see, both how to act in costume as well as how to act around others in costume." Um, I don't—

Teresa: This one we did on our con etiquette episode, so please take a look at that. Um, the biggest takeaway as far as cosplay etiquette goes, is cosplay is not consent.

Travis: Correct.

Teresa: Not to touch, not to photograph, not to comment on, really.

Travis: Yeah, and not to touch in any— Even if it's, like wings or something.

Teresa: Right.

Travis: Where they're like this in the... Okay, so real quick, here are some bullet points. If you're in costume, be aware of potentially added, I mean, for lack of a better word, wingspan.

Teresa: Accoutrement.

Travis: Yeah. If you're carrying any kind of weapon. If you're new to cosplay, a lot of the time conventions or places will have you actually check weapons with them, where they need to approve what you're bringing in to make sure it's not actually dangerous, but then be aware of that extra space you might take up, more than normal by, like, wings or a helmet or whatever. And along those same lines—

Teresa: Or long capes or dresses.

Travis: A tail, whatever.

Teresa: Things like that.

Travis: Um, decreased visibility from any kind of headgear. If you find yourself losing your, uh, peripheral vision or if you're vision's impaired, make sure that you have, like, a handler or somebody with you to help you through crowded spaces. And then on the other side, to appreciate it, if you appreciate someone's cosplay, um, it's okay to compliment their costume, not their body.

Teresa: Correct.

Travis: So, like, "That's an amazing costume," versus "You look so sexy," right? Costume? Great. Sexy? [grumbles] Don't touch them, at all, without asking.

Teresa: So, don't touch the person's body, and don't touch their costume, either, because a lot of costumes look fantastic, but they are fragile. So don't touch them.

Travis: Yes. And if you're gonna take a photograph, ask. "May I have a photograph with you? Thank you very much."

Teresa: And if it's not just for personal use, you need to ask about posting it places or reproducing it somewhere or anything like that, even if you're—

Travis: Yes, so that you can tag them or credit them or whatever.

Teresa: Yeah. And, you know, if you're gonna put it on your Twitter or on your Insta story, you need to tell them that, so that they can be aware and give consent if that's okay, and say no if it's not.

Travis: And just like them being aware of the extra space their costume might take up, be aware of that. If you're walking towards someone and they're, like, in a big suit of armor or whatever, scoot a little bit to the side. Be conscientious.

Let's see. This is from Joe. "At a convention site where the event is the next day, if you see a presenter in, for example, the hotel lobby, is it cool to walk up and talk as you would at the convention, despite being outside the convention start time?"

So, here's the thing that I will say to lay all the cards out on the table. What you might run into is the person might not be "on."

Teresa: Right.

Travis: So, I don't know that there's anything wrong with it, especially... I have attended many conventions now and once I'm there, basically once I'm off the plane I'm, you know, I appreciate being recognized. You go to conventions, at least I do, because you like, you know, attention. [laughs] But no, you like interaction with fans. That's what I meant to say.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: But you like, you know, interacting with fans. But the person might not be ready. You don't know how far they've traveled, you don't know last time they slept, how long they've been up, any of that stuff.

Teresa: Last time they ate, any of that stuff.

Travis: Right. So I think it's okay, but you might not have the same quality of interaction as you might have talking to them, like, on the convention floor or at the event you're supposed to see them at.

Teresa: I think it's a good idea to, if you wish to interact with them, say hello and say, "I'm looking forward to seeing you at the convention."

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: That leaves it open for someone to either invite you to sit down and talk, or to give the "Thank you very much, looking forward to it too!"

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: And that's the end, that's the goodbye.

Travis: Right, exactly. Um, especially I would say that the additional caveat to this would be, like, if they're checking to a hotel and they're, like, dragging a suitcase behind them, in passing, like, "Oh, hi! I'm a big fan!" That's one thing, but, like, stopping them before they've had a chance to, like, put their bag and go to the bathroom and grab something to eat, like—

Teresa: Well, there's no way that you could know any of those things, but I think that if they look busy, leave them alone.

Travis: Yeah. Um, we're gonna come back with more questions, but first, how about a thank you note for our sponsor?

[theme music plays]

Teresa: This week's Shmanners is sponsored by Quip. So, it's the spring. Time for spring cleanin'! Why not start with your teeth?

Travis: Your teef!

Teresa: Um, Quip—

Travis: Listen. We've only got... Well—

Teresa: Well.

Travis: Actually, I was gonna say you can get dentures, and also baby teeth.

Teresa: I mean, I...

Travis: But listen.

Teresa: I guess so.

Travis: But take good care of your teeth, is what I'm trying to say.

Teresa: Take good care of your teeth, and Quip can help you do that. So, Quip has a wonderful electric toothbrush that is backed by over 25,000 dental professionals. They have thousands of five star reviews, and they are automatically delivered to your door on a dentist recommended schedule of every three months for just five dollars.

Those brush heads are fantastic, and they're not super bulky. It looks like really just a regular toothbrush with kind of a thicker handle. And, introducing— Quip has a new brush just for kids!

Travis: Yeah!

Teresa: So it's the same version, but just scaled down.

Travis: Smaller.

Teresa: Just smaller, so that they can get everything that the regular Quip has, so the brush heads, the vibration, the timer, all that great stuff, and the... Doesn't it even have the, like, little travel case thing?

Travis: I think so.

Teresa: I think it does. I think it does.

Travis: I also have been told that they now have, like, a watermelon flavor toothpaste for kids.

Teresa: Ooh!

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Wonderful.

Travis: Brent's a big fan of that on Trends Like These. He loves that watermelon flavor toothpaste!

Teresa: And you know what? I have kind of a smaller mouth. I would appreciate a smaller toothbrush. Maybe I'll get one.

Travis: Okay, all right. I didn't— I wasn't— I'm not stopping you!

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: That's fine!

Teresa: So, they have over one million happy mouths who love Quip, and you can make your mouth happy with Quip starting for just \$25, if you go to [Getquip.com/shmanners](https://getquip.com/shmanners), and that will get you your first refill pack for free. So, \$25 dollars and your first refill pack for free. That's [Getquip.com/shmanners](https://getquip.com/shmanners).

Speaker One: I can't hear myself.

Speaker Two: Are you plugged in?

Speaker One: But my I'm assuming [crosstalk]

Speaker Two: Is your headset [crosstalk] have on headphones?

Speaker Three: These are real podcast listeners, not actors.

Speaker Two: And they transition [crosstalk]

Speaker Three: Hey, thanks for coming. Here's a list of descriptors. What would you use to describe the perfect podcast?

Speaker One: I mean, vulgarity.

Speaker Two: Dumb. Definitely dumb.

Speaker One: And, like, right here. This one. Meritless.

Speaker Three: What if I told you there was a podcast that did have all of that?

Speaker One: [gasps]

Speaker Two: No.

Speaker Three: Jordan, Jesse, Go! And it's free.

Speaker One: Jordan, Jesse, Go?

Speaker Two: Jordan, Jesse, Go?

Speaker One: Jordan, Jesse, Go.

Speaker Three: Jordan, Jesse, Go! A real podcast.

Janet: Hey! I'm Janet Varney, and like many of you, some more recent than others, I used to be a teenager. In fact, just about all of my friends were too, including wonderful women like Alison Brie.

Alison: I'm dead center on the balance beam, and this is, like, a big gym. All the kids— kids' parents are there watching. I have to stop— Like, you know when you have to pee so bad and you can't even move? And then I just go. I just pee.

Janet: Oh no...

Alison: Right in the middle of the high balance beam.

Janet: [laughs]

Alison: So join me every week on the JV Club podcast, where I speak with complicated, funny, messy humans as we reminisce about our adolescences and how they led us to becoming who we are. Find it every Thursday on Maximum Fun.

Travis: Okay. Moira asks, "What is the proper etiquette when inviting friends to a game night or party, and how should you go about doing food? Potluck? Prepared food? Snack trays? What is ideal?"

So, let's stick with the game night thing, because "and party" is a big one, so we'll just stick— First of all, I will talk about the game night aspect of it. If you want to play a specific game, if you have a game in mind, tell them "I would like you all to come over to play the Firefly board game, or the Game of Thrones board game."

Those are two of my favorites. Because that way, expectation is set, because what you don't want to do is say, "Let's have a board game night!" And they're thinking, "Great! I love Monopoly!" And you're thinking, "I want to play Risk," right?

Teresa: Right.

Travis: And it's like, whoa, those are two different kinds of games! And if you're just wanting to play general board games, you need to have, like, an open mind about the kind of games they like to play and what they might bring. But yeah, I think setting an expectation, because you know, also some games last longer than others. Code Names might go 45 minutes to an hour. The Game of Thrones board game might go four and a half hours, right?

Teresa: Right, and I would bring a different snack for Game of Thrones, I think. I would want something with, like—

Travis: Dragon eggs, or...

Teresa: Protein.

Travis: Oh, okay, sure.

Teresa: Keep me goin'.

Travis: Oh, I see, yes, uh-huh. A flagon.

Teresa: Maybe not so much sugar, right, because that's, like, a high spike, and we want to keep an even keel.

Travis: Uh, as far as the food goes, the first factor to keep in mind is time. What time is it?

Teresa: Right, what time is it? Like, if this is an after dinner thing, um, set maybe at 8:00, that way no one is expecting to be fed dinner as if, if you started 6:00, where that's dinner hour, so people come expecting more food for dinner.

Travis: Yes. Um, if you're doing, like, an afternoon thing, like "Come over from 3:00 to 6:00" or whatever, you can probably get by with, like, some snacks.

Teresa: Right, because if you kick people out at 6:00, that makes people feel like, "Okay, I'm responsible for my own food, my own dinner."

Travis: Right. Now, what I would say is if you're going to make dinner, either plan to order food like pizza or something, or make something that you can put in the oven and forget about, so that you can still be there playing the games with them, instead of having to, like, pop up and stir or... "Everybody stop now while I make dinner," something that, like, let's you... That's why I like sous vide. You just put it right in there, and it's fine.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Um, but I think a lot of it comes down to, uh, expectation, like I said.

Teresa: Right.

Travis: But, like, we will feed you.

Teresa: Pick something and also, like, stick with it, right? So if you do want to do all snack trays, let the people know. Let them know that you are expecting them to bring foods, and not just, like, chips and dips. Things like that.

Travis: This question is from Jessica. "How tight should my hand squeeze be when I shake a hand?"

Teresa: Hmm.

Travis: Firm.

Teresa: Yeah. This is... So, I just don't know if there's really a way to quantify it. I would say that you definitely need an energized hand.

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: Um, and try and, I guess, match whatever the other person is giving you.

Travis: See, I would say, like, if this was acting, I'm making an even smaller application of people who understand it, but rather than talk about the goal, right, which is firmness, I'm going to talk about the tactic, which is purpose.

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: So, like, when you go to shake the hand, it's not about how hard you're squeezing. It's that you're doing it with confidence, and you're doing it with purpose. So, that way you're not trying to, like... "How tight should I be s—" You're just like, "Here we are. I am present. We're doing it." You know what I mean?

Teresa: Right.

Travis: So you're just thinking about being engaged, right?

Teresa: Yeah. All of those words are very vague, and I'm sorry. [laughs]

Travis: But I think, like, that's the difference.

Teresa: But it's true, it's true. Purposeful, energized...

Travis: Because here's the thing. I think that firmness is a scale, right?

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: Where you either are engaged or you're not. You either have purpose or you don't, so it's like, if you're shaking... Because that's the thing. Not everybody's the same amount of strength. Not everybody can grip the same, you know, firmness. So, rather than think about how hard you're gripping, it's more just about being present in the handshake.

Teresa: I like it.

Travis: Because sometimes I've had handshakes where it's like, "Oh, this feels perfunctory. It feels like you're just shaking my hand to get to the next thing."

Teresa: Mm.

Travis: Let's just live in this handshake for a minute.

Um, this question is from Clouded Crystals. "When talking to vendors at a con, how does one end and leave a conversation without making it seem like I don't

like the vendor's content? I don't want to be pressured into buying something I don't like, but don't want to be rude."

This is something I have also felt, be it at a con or anywhere. If I walk into a store to look and I instantly realize, like, "Oh, I don't want anything in this store." I feel so weird turning around and leaving.

Teresa: I always say thank you, when I leave a store, when I leave a stall, I make sure that... And this happens a lot. You know, you are taking up the tradesperson's time. I mean, even if you don't have any specific questions, usually someone will say, "Can I help you look for something? Are you looking for anything specific?" Something like that.

In the case of, like, a con, I recall taking Bebe around in a stroller, and she couldn't see very much. So, sometimes I would pick up maybe, like, a stuffed animal or something and say, "Oh, look how cute this is! Look at this!" And she'd be like, "Ah, yeah, yeah!" And then I would put it back down and I say, "Thank you." Or, even if I didn't touch anything or wasn't looking for anything, I might say, "Thank you for your time."

Travis: Right.

Teresa: Something like that lets people know that you appreciated their thing and it's just not for you.

Travis: Yeah. I think when they're done pitching or showing you, "Okay! Thank you for your time!" And start walking, right?

Teresa: Yep.

Travis: Because I think that if you are done, it is on you to disengage physically.

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: Because, like, if you say, "Okay, thank you!" And you're waiting for them to say, "You may go." Like, it's not gonna happen.

Teresa: And if... It's important that you do disengage if you're not interested, because you're taking their time away from other customers who might want to

actually buy something. So you're not being impolite if you're leaving without purchasing. That's just the way that shopping works.

Travis: That's normal, yeah. Most people are probably doing that.

Teresa: Um, but if you're bogarting the person that is rude. So if you just say, "Yes, uh, that was so interesting. Thank you very much." And you're out.

Travis: Yeah. Um, and maybe that is also another important thing to keep in mind, I would say. Another factor here is, like, once you've looked and you know you're not... Don't keep asking them questions about their products. You know what I mean? Like, once you've made the decision, like, "I'm not gonna buy anything..." Like, curiosity is fine. It's okay to ask questions, but especially if they're busy, disengage.

Um, this question is from [disappointed tone] Fretzel. I like the name, I didn't make it sound sad. It's just, I liked saying it like that. "When you run into someone by chance, what are good ways to feel out where they're at on a scale of, 'doesn't want to talk to you at all' to 'ready to drop what they're doing and go hang out somewhere?'"

Teresa: Hmm. I think that this has to do a lot with body language, for sure. Um, if they continue walking, they're not really into hanging out. Um, but if... Perhaps if someone were to sit down next to you or to continue walking in your direction, so as you walk together maybe? What do you think?

Travis: I've also found that a lot of it has to do with, uh, how the conversation is... So, if you think of a conversation like passing a ball back and forth, what you want it to be is "I pass the ball to you, you pass it back to me," right?

What you don't want is, "I pass the ball to you. You catch it. I reach out. I take the ball back out of your hands and toss it to you again." Right? So if I say, like, "Oh, how's Stan?"

And you're like, "Stan's great."

And I go, "Oh, and how's Susan?"

"Susan's great."

Teresa: Oh, yeah, okay.

Travis: "And how's your job?"

"It's great."

Right? Like at that point—

Teresa: Those are all balls that have not been thrown back.

Travis: Right. If I say, "How's Susan?"

And you say, "Oh, Susan's great!"

And then they say, "And how's Jen?"

"Oh, Jen's great!"

Right? Now we're talking back and forth, and they are asking about me as much as I am asking about them.

Like, "What have you been up to?"

"What have *you* been up to?"

"How's it going?"

Teresa: What a great metaphor. That was really great.

Travis: Thank you very much. Um, and so if that is happening...

Teresa: What is that? Is that Stanislavsky? No, Cohen.

Travis: I think it's Boleslawski. I don't know it's one of those. Meisner?

Teresa: There's some— It's not Meisner.

Travis: That might be Meisner. It might be Meisner.

Teresa: These are all acting people who all have different methods. I think it's Cohen.

Travis: There's another one that's, like... I think it's Suzuki, which I also think is the name of, like, a 4x4 brand, maybe, or an ATV brand. It's not important.

Teresa: I don't know.

Travis: Uh, but anyways, I think as long as they seem engaged, don't second guess it. Right? You don't have any reason to think they're not interested in talking to you. But, if you do feel like either you need to go somewhere or they

need to go somewhere, I think say, like, "Hey, do you want to hang out sometime? I haven't seen you in forever. Let's make plans." Right?

And if they say, "Yeah, are you free Tuesday? Are you free right now?" Right? And if they say, "Yeah, we should hang out sometime! I'll reach out to you!" Right? Like, probably time to wrap up that conversation.

But the thing is is, like, I think as long as you are paying attention to it... Because this is a thing that I catch myself doing, which is thinking, like, "Yes, this person seems like they like talking to me, but what if they really don't?" And it's like, listen. If they seem like they like talking to you, and you have no reason to think otherwise, why read into it past that?

Teresa: Right.

Travis: Don't dominate too much of their time, but maybe—

Teresa: Maybe they want to talk to you.

Travis: Right! Uh, this question is from Abigail. "When I'm walking down campus and listening to music in my earbuds, am I allowed to sing out loud?"

Teresa: You're allowed to do whatever you want.

Travis: Yeah. I sing out loud all the time. Windows down, I was jamming out to some Walk The Moon today with my windows down. It's okay. I think the thing is is it's not about allowed. Might people look at you? Yeah, maybe. Also I would say, how loud are you singing? Like, are you singing at, like, normal volume? Are you just, like, screaming?

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Like, I would say...

Teresa: If you wouldn't sing that loud with your headphones off, you probably don't want to sing that loud with your headphones on, just because of the attention you'll be gathering.

Travis: But listen. You might get some weird looks if you're, like, singing at the volume I'm talking at now, but they're not gonna call the police on you. And also,

I would go so far as to say, they won't remember that you did that 30 minutes later. Like, they're not gonna go home and be like, "You'll never believe what ha—" And, like, no. I think you're fine.

Teresa: If I encountered someone who was singing with their headphones on I'd be like, "Man, they're having a great time."

Travis: Right? "Oh, they're really enjoying themselves!" That's exactly what I'd think. Um, let's see. This is from Jennifer. "Hosting a housewarming soon. My fiance doesn't drink at all. I barely do. We make no secret of this, and yet I suspect a ton of people will show up with a bottle of wine or liquor. Suggestions on how to prevent this? It's just not a useful gift for us."

Teresa: I don't think that there's any real polite way to say, "Don't bring booze."

Travis: I think they're talking specifically as a housewarming gift, though.

Teresa: Right. But it is... That's a normal housewarming gift for adults, so I think that what you need to do is brace yourself for the fact that you're going to get them. You don't have to open anything right away. Please. That's one of the things that people feel like, "Oh, if someone brings me a bottle of wine, do we need to drink it?" No, absolutely not.

Thank them for their gift, and then put it away, and give it to somebody else. That's what I would do if I got something like that that I didn't really use, and I think I have done that. You know, liquors are highly personal as far as, like—

Travis: Oh, who likes what? Yeah.

Teresa: Who likes what. So if I got a bottle of—

Travis: I thought you were meaning, like, "Oh, you— you got me a bourbon!"

Teresa: [laughs] No.

Travis: "Who else could this be for except me?"

Teresa: If I got a bottle of bourbon, I like bourbon. I would keep bourbon.

Travis: But if you got, like, a bottle of brandy...

Teresa: Uh, that's not my deal.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: So I would hold onto it and save it for someone I did know liked brandy. I'd just re-gift it.

Travis: I would also say there is a context here of how close of friends are these, because I have friends that are close enough to me that I would be like, "And Bob, don't bring me a bottle of wine like you did last time, and you know I don't drink, buddy!" Right? Like, I would do that, right?

But I think that because you're worried about them bringing something you won't use, there's probably enough of a space there that you don't feel comfortable doing that. But I think if it's someone you're close enough that you would feel comfortable doing it, there's nothing wrong with doing that.

Teresa: Right. But you're probably, from people you don't very well, gonna get it.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: So just smile and nod and say "Thanks," and put it away to give it away to somebody else later.

Travis: Yeah. Um, Satchel asks, "Is it rude to say, 'No problem,' 'Of course,' 'Don't worry about it,' instead of 'You're welcome'?"

Teresa: This is a highly generational thing, and we've talked about this. What was that episode? Did we do a thank you?

Travis: I think it was a thank you, yeah.

Teresa: Thank you, welcome, something like that.

Travis: I think our first episode was thank you notes. It might have been in there.

Teresa: Might have been in there. Um, so it's just a generational divide, really. Generations before Millennials especially, or Generation X I guess I should say,

believe in "You're welcome" because that's how they were taught. That's how their world revolves, and now...

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Um, a lot of people, Millennial or earlier... Later?

Travis: Later.

Teresa: Later. Millennial or later, use all of these things interchangeably.

Travis: We know that it... I think that that said, it's like, the old wisdom... I don't mean that. The former? The prior wisdom?

Teresa: Prior, sure.

Travis: Was that "You're welcome," was, like, "You are welcome." It is, like, a statement about the exchange that has just happened. But if someone says "Thank you," and I say, "Don't worry about it," or "No problem," they'd be like, "No. I did worry about it. It was pro—" Like, it downplays their thank you to you.

Teresa: Or it makes it feel like, "Well, if this was no problem, what is problem?"

Travis: Right.

Teresa: Or anything like that. That's not something that...

Travis: I don't feel that way at all, but that is...

Teresa: People of a certain generation feel.

Travis: Yes. I think that that is how some people feel. Saying like, "Don't downplay my thank you!" It's like, "Well, okay."

Teresa: You are always safe to say "You're welcome." It's a generalized thing, and you're not gonna offend anyone if you say "You're welcome," but if you find that yourself, you say "No problem, no worries," any of that kind of stuff, that is something that a younger generation will understand better.

Travis: I mean, I say "Don't worry," I say "No worries," I say "No problem," so if you're looking to me, to ask me whether it's rude or not, no.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Uh, we got one last question here. This is from Cassie. "If no one tells you what to wear under a cap and gown for graduation, what do you wear under a cap and gown?"

Teresa: I would say you should wear something that you would be comfortable going out to eat in afterwards.

Travis: That's fair.

Teresa: Because that's usually what happens. [laughs]

Travis: I wasn't going to... At my college graduation, I wasn't going to, like, go?

Teresa: You weren't going to walk.

Travis: I wasn't gonna walk, yeah. Because we had... So, we had a drama department graduation that I was gonna go to, but then, like, our graduating class was huge so it was like, go to the football stadium and all sit in this section and stand up. "That's me!" And sit back down. I don't even think we stood up individually. I think it was just by school, but then my dad was like, "I'm gonna come!" And I was like, "Oh, okay, cool."

So I got a cap and gown, and then I just, like, wore a T-shirt and jeans under it, and that was fine. You know, I wasn't gonna take it off, and then Dad and I were just gonna, like, hang out afterwards. That was fine, but I think if you're planning to go out to eat, or somewhere nice...

Teresa: Plan for afterwards, because you probably... There might be family, friends there who wanna talk to you, see you, um, maybe like you said take you out to dinner, something like that. So plan for the activity that you're doing afterwards.

Travis: So that's gonna do it for us! This was— I always love doing an Ask Shmanners. Maybe we should start doing them more. It's fun to, like, [scatting]

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: It's like jazz, you know? It's about the questions you don't answer. Um, so—

Teresa: What?

Travis: What? You know? I don't know. Um—

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Go check out all the other amazing shows on Maximumfun.org, and then like I said, my dad and I are gonna be doing some DnD livestreams on Friday night, and I think other nights in the weekend, too. I'm not sure when. Pay attention to my Twitter and I'll tweet more about it. Uh, yeah! What else?

Teresa: You can follow our Twitter, @shmannerstcast, and thank you for that thumbnail art Kayla M. Wasil. You can join our Facebook— our fan run Facebook group, Shmanners Fanners. Gosh, there's a lot of F's and stuff in there. [laughs]

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: And we want to always say thank you to Keely Weis Photography for that cover banner. Also, thank you to Brent "brentalfloss" Black for our theme music, which is available as a ringtone where those are found.

Travis: And I think that's gonna do it for us. So join us again next time!

Teresa: No RSVP required.

Travis: You've been listening to Shmanners.

Teresa: Manners, Shmanners. Get it?

[theme music plays]

MaximumFun.org.

Comedy and culture.

Artist owned.

Listener supported.