

Shmanners 171: Family Vacations

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Travis: Are we there yet?

Teresa: No.

Travis: Are we there yet?

Teresa: No.

Travis: Are we there yet?

Teresa: 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: Are you gettin' hyped, my dear?

Travis: I am! Gettin' hyped!

Teresa: Hello, dear.

Travis: Hello, dear! Hello, dove! Dove dear, dear dove.

Teresa: Oh boy.

Travis: Oh boy. Well listen, here's the thing. We're talking about family vacations, right?

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: And next week, me and Justin and Griffin and Dad are basically going on a McElroy... what I consider to be a McElroy 1.0 family vacation, right?

Teresa: Sure.

Travis: I mean, it's a work-cation.

Teresa: It's a work-cation.

Travis: But we get to hang out together, right? So it's like a family vaca—we get to go a bunch of different places together. And this—okay, this isn't part of family vacation, but it also feels like, because we're doing this thing where like, Dad and I are going to the West Coast, Griffin and Justin are going to the East Coast and the South, and then we're meeting up at San Diego Comic Con, it feels like in a fantasy story where like, everybody goes on a quest, right? But then ends up meeting together to fight the big final boss?

Teresa: Oh!

Travis: I'm very excited about it.

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: But then after that, we are then also going on a McElroy family 2.0 vacation—

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: With like, 20 people.

Teresa: To the beach.

Travis: And so I am amped up about family vacations. Um, especially—I don't know—I know a little bit about how family vacations have gone, like, in your family, but in my family, like, family vacations are big, like, hand hold memories for me. Like, I—you know, they stand out. They're very big like, um, place—you know, like markers for me.

Teresa: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Travis: Where it's like, I can remember—especially like, my grandmother Nonny lived in Orlando for many years, so we would go down and like, go to Disney, and like, do beach stuff all the time, or also when my dad worked, uh, for the radio station, the radio station like, had a timeshare in Myrtle Beach that they would—or—anyway, somewhere around there.

Teresa: One of those beaches.

Travis: Yes. Uh, Hilton Head. It was Hilton Head. And they would like, award it to like, super good employees, and my dad was a super good employee, so we got to go there all the time. And like, the getting in the car, the drive down, all the preparation, the time there, it was very formative!

Teresa: Yes, I agree. I also recall, uh, trips in the family Chrysler minivan.

Travis: Yes, mm-hmm. The—the wood sided van, for some reason?

Teresa: I didn't have—

Travis: Oh, really? We had a wood sided van and a wood sided station wagon [laughs] at some point.

Teresa: [laughs] How a la mode.

Travis: Yes, it—I have, at this point, no idea why. Still no. Okay.

Teresa: No, ours was—ours was, uh, light blue.

Travis: Uh, yeah. We had many minivans. And, because there—here's the thing. So, just to get in the nitty gritty of seat arrangements in the minivan with the family, Griffin almost always got the backseat to himself, because he was the only one of the three brothers who could actually like, sleep, boom, just like that.

Teresa: Hmm.

Travis: Like, that kid—you're a block away from the house, he's asleep. Like, and—and he would also sleep with one eye kind of a little bit open—

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: —and you could see him looking around, and Justin and I would just like, stare and like, wave our hands to try to see if he was faking it, and then most of the time it was like, Justin and I fighting in like, the middle seat, or, thank God, they started putting in like, the captain seats in the middle seat area, so we didn't have to like, elbow each other and stuff. Oh, man. That was a huge, like, improvement in—in family vacations.

Teresa: Well, it was normally me and my younger sister in the middle row, and my older sister got the back row, because my younger sister and I, uh, often got carsick.

Travis: Ohh.

Teresa: So we could not be in the very back. Um, something about being in the back and the wheels and all that kind of stuff made it even worse for us.

Travis: Ooh.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: See, I—the only time I ever remember sitting in the back... I remember sitting in the back a lot when like, everybody else was asleep and I was awake, so I could sit back there, 'cause I can't read in a car—or I can't sleep in a car. And I would sit back there and read and like, make eye contact with my dad in the rear view mirror.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Like, you know, 11 PM like... and wave at him, and he'd like, nod back, 'cause we were the only two ones awake in the car. Uh, but yeah. We used to drive to every vacation. Like, I—I think—no, we flew to places, but only when it was like, it does not make sense for us all to drive at this point. It would be silly. And so we'd fly there. Like, I think—

Teresa: My mom tells me stories about flying when I was young, but I—my first actual remembrance of flying anywhere was when I was around 18.

Travis: Oh, really?

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: I can remember us flying I think once to like, New York, and to Florida once—but like, we just didn't, you know? It just wasn't...

Teresa: Took to the open road.

Travis: Yeah! Like, my dad really likes driving and really likes doing the car trips. And like I said, for a long time, like... I don't see—I don't see it this way, 'cause I'm a spoiled brat, and for me the vacation starts when you get to the place, but for my family like, the drive was part of the vacation. Like, you had, you know, entertainment planned for the car. You had like, "Oh, we're gonna stop somewhere and get some audio books to listen to in the car, we got snacks planned, oh, where are we gonna stop for dinner?" Like, that was all part of the plan. Not for me now, no. If I could, I would teleport everywhere.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: So, let's talk about family vacations.

Teresa: Okay. So, the idea of vacationing in general probably dates back about 2000 years.

Travis: That's a really long time!

Teresa: Yes, but—

Travis: I don't know if you know that. That's longer than I've been alive.

Teresa: [laughs] But it waxes and wanes throughout history, because, um, travel itself can't really exist for the, you know, the masses, unless there's peace and prosperity.

Travis: Well, I—you know, we—a lot of like, the car vacation now, right? You think about like, the leisure class, right? And you think about like, the middle class, of being like, "Well, we have expendable income." Right?

Teresa: Well, even—even further back from that, right?

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: So, in the Roman Empire, um, there was actually a kind of like, tourism... like, enterprise, because the Empire was just so big, right? They—they pretty much owned all the light touches... [pauses] so—

Travis: I—what I like—

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: I think you—like, I like the reference and everyone understood it, but what you said was, "They owned all the—" not "All that the light touches," you just said, "They own all the light touches," so like, I just pictured Rome going around lightly touching people's shoulders—

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: [creepy voice] "I'm Rome!" Doop doop doop doop doop!

Teresa: Anyway, um, so... because you had the protection and the peace that comes with a large territory, um—

Travis: That's something that they talk about I think in like, episode one or two of West Wing, where it's like, "If you were a Roman citizen, you could walk anywhere in the Roman Empire and just say, 'I am a Roman citizen,' and be protected." Is that true? Who knows.

Teresa: Uh, as far as vacations go, yes?

Travis: [high pitched voice] Sure!

Teresa: Yes. Um, because there was the protection granted by this huge swath of land.

Travis: Gotcha.

Teresa: Um, but then, the Dark Ages happened...

Travis: Oh, I've heard of those.

Teresa: Yeah, lots of war going on. Um, and you—because of the kind of, you know, pillaging lifestyle that a lot of people lived through, or... didn't—

Travis: Didn't, yeah.

Teresa: Uh, you really couldn't go very far away from where you knew you were protected, right? So that was pretty much... that could be as small as like, the castle courtyard, at times, if you were under siege, or wherever the, you know, your lord finished their lands.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: So then, the only way that you really got to travel during the Middle Ages and a little bit after was if you were on a religious pilgrimage, because those roads were more highly protected than any other roads.

Travis: That makes a lot of sense.

Teresa: Right. But it really—I wouldn't... I wouldn't say those are like, vacations, right?

Travis: Mm—no, I would say... you know what? By definition, no! Isn't a pilgrimage like, supposed to be, you know, tough? Like, that's the thing is a pilgrimage is like, something you prove your devotion by going through it to do, not something you're like—

Teresa: Well, it's not supposed to be easy, I think. I think it's supposed to be long, for sure. [laughs]

Travis: Yeah. I don't know. Man, listen. It's been a long time since I've paid any attention to religion, but I'm pretty sure that it's not like... most of the time when you think of like, religious pilgrimages, it's not like, "Whoo!" [laughs] "And while we're there we'll hit the water park, yeah!"

Teresa: [laughs] Uh, so other than that, the other way to travel was to become like, a sailor, right?

Travis: That's right, but that—once again, not easy!

Teresa: Not easy! Um, or if you were affluent enough, you could be sent as an ambassador to another country, right? For your king.

Travis: Which is probably the most fun of those three, I would say.

Teresa: Probably.

Travis: 'Cause I think once you're there, you just have to like, be cool!

Teresa: Right. Um—

Travis: But even then—we're talking about goin' to foreign co—like, I think it's a thing that's really easy to take for granted these days of like, "And I'll just zip over there." Like, the chances of dying on your way over were probably pretty high!

Teresa: Um, so then, we skip until basically the, uh, Industrial Revolution, when the classes really become defined, right? So we have the working class, we have the middle class, and the upper class. The upper class have always had the luxury of travel. Um, they probably had summer homes, um—

Travis: Yes. We've all seen Downton Abbey.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: We know.

Teresa: And things like that. Again, because they had the means to protect themselves.

Travis: Yes. And, you know, the other thing... [sighs] I can't believe I'm about to defend the upper class, but at a time where like, there was very little... you couldn't like, put it in a bank and like, make mon—like, and trust that that was gonna be fine, you know? Like, a bank wasn't as insured as they are now, and all that stuff, that a good investment was property, right?

Teresa: Absolutely.

Travis: So you would buy the summer home, you would buy an estate, you would buy those things, because in the event of, you know, economic downturn or whatever, or struggles, you could always sell it.

Teresa: Right.

Travis: Yes. As opposed to if you put your money in a bank and somebody robbed that bank, or the bank burned down or whatever, it's like, "Well, that money's gone."

Teresa: So, a lot of this changed in the early 1900s, when the worker mentality changed, because there was this kind of... this flip in the idea that, uh, happy workers work better, right?

Travis: Yeah, re—wow! Whoa!

Teresa: Whoa! Um, and so salaried workers, um, a lot of times, especially through the 1920s, were actually given vacations. Like, pro—like you had the timeshare thing, right?

Travis: Yeah, like as rewards.

Teresa: So like, the company paid for your vacation at their vacation spot.

Travis: Hmm. Interesting.

Teresa: Right. And the whole idea was, because if you got that time off not only did you have something to look forward to, you also felt refreshed, you worked better afterwards—

Travis: And you felt probably grateful to the company, you know? "Oh, the company sent us on vacation, how nice of them."

Teresa: Absolutely. Um, and again, this idea of the middle class really boomed after World War II. I mean, we've talked about this as far as like, the suburban nature of the new American ideal—

Travis: Everyone wanted the dream.

Teresa: Right.

Travis: Everyone wanted the dream!

Teresa: Also, you had these sparkling new highways, brought about a lot by the—like, the New Deal, right?

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: Um, a lot of people, when they got back from the war, could finally afford a car and a house. They had financial stability—

Travis: And families! I mean, we had the boom, right?

Teresa: Exactly.

Travis: Where the baby boomers, right? So it was like, "What are we gonna do with all these kids? We gotta take 'em somewhere, they're driving me nuts!"

Teresa: That's right! Um, and the businesses in the US started to try and really capitalize on this. And some people—some historians think that it really starts with The World's Fair. Um, where you have these big exhibitions, bringing people from all over. Uh, there's food, there's accommodation, there's things to do, like, all this kind of stuff, so—

Travis: You've created like, a universal destination. A thing of like, "There is a thing here that you don't wanna miss." It'll give you a goal, it'll give you a, you know, an X marks the spot kind of deal.

Teresa: Exactly! And if you think about it, places like Disney World are pretty much like permanent World's Fairs, aren't they?

Travis: 100%, yes.

Teresa: Like, they've got a carnival, they've got, you know, food and—

Travis: There's attractions, you know?

Teresa: Attractions, exactly.

Travis: It's the reason it's called "attractions," 'cause you attract people to it. And it doesn't have to be rides, though that doesn't hurt. It can be, you know, that like—that's one of my favorite things to do, uh, now, currently in, uh, Epcot. They have in the, uh, thing of the world, a display of like, all these like, Coco designs, and like, these costumes and stuff. And it's like, "Oh, that's really cool."

But I'm also an old man who doesn't care so much about the rides anymore so much as I'm like, "This is interesting!" as I sip up beer.

Teresa: [laughs] Uh, not only do you have these attractions that are man made, but also Teddy Roosevelt, uh, made all these really great National Parks that you can go to.

Travis: Destinations.

Teresa: Destinations, right? And so, after World War II, these kind of historic areas started to... you know, there was a lot of patriotic pride, and to go see the purple mountains' majesty, and all of that business, right?

Travis: Those waves of grain, yes?

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: Listen. If you haven't gone to the Grand Canyon, it lives up to it. I we—I went, we did the Max Fun thing there, from the rim of the Grand Canyon, and I thought before I got there like, "This'll probably be cool." I was not ready for it! It's ma—it is, I'm, not being ironic, I'm being completely sincere, majestic. It is gigantic and impressive, highly recommend. You know what? I'll say it first. The Grand Canyon? Pretty cool.

Teresa: And if you couldn't afford any kind of like, luxury lodges, which there are a lot of, uh, just on the edge of a lot of these, uh, National Parks, you could always go camping!

Travis: Yep.

Teresa: Um, and if you... you know, this was something that was made kind of part of the American experience, with Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts.

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: So—and we've talked a little bit about that too.

Travis: And you know, I—I think we're in about the right era for like, Route 66, right?

Teresa: Absolutely!

Travis: Let's drive across the whole country. Let's like, start doin' roadside attractions and stands and make... and they started to cater to travelers, you know?

Teresa: Exactly.

Travis: More gas stations along the way, restaurants, pit stops. You know, towns started to spring up around roads that would take you across the country. I'm just saying, we've made a cross country trip—uh, well, one big one when we moved from Cincinnati to, uh, LA.

Teresa: Right.

Travis: A 9 day drive.

Teresa: Oh, man.

Travis: Um, and a lot of it was not on Route 66, but driving pa—like, side by side. They have now built, you know, like a lot of new highways are literally like, two feet beside Route 66. Uh, and yeah. It—I mean, listen. It's a cool drive! [laughs]

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: It's a—listen. 9 days. It's a lot. Wouldn't wanna do it with Bebe now—

Teresa: Oh no.

Travis: —but, it's a cool drive. It is, driving through the desert. It is really cool. Listen, we're gonna talk more about family vacations. You know what? When we come back, Teresa and I will tell you about the first family vacation we took together, but first, here's a thank you note to our sponsors.

[theme music plays]

Travis: We would like to thank Zola this week, uh, for sponsoring our—our show, but also for making wedding registry just like, a slam dunk. As you know, here on Shmanners, we love sports.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Zola is both a slam dunk, and a grand slam.

Teresa: [laughing] That is not where I thought you were gonna go with—

Travis: Wh—what'd you think I was gonna say?

Teresa: I thought you were gonna say we love weddings! We love talking about weddings.

Travis: Well, we love that too, but mostly we love sports! This is a triple play, and a hat trick, and... a soccer goal.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: [laughs] Okay, so here's the thing. Zola takes the stress out of wedding planning with free wedding websites, your dream wedding registry, and affordable save the dates and invitations, and easy to use planning tools. It's like an all-in-one, or most-in-one stop.

Teresa: One stop shop.

Travis: Yes. Yes, and that's the thing. Listen, Teresa and I have gotten married. We did it. We did it! And there's a lot of moving pieces.

Teresa: There sure are.

Travis: There's a lot of like, big decisions to make, but also a lot of like, individual like, "What are we gonna do about this? And this? And this?" So why not—

Teresa: And a site like Zola really walks you through it, um, because they have pretty much everything in one place, and it's very easy to navigate. You can do your registry, you can do your invitations, you can do all your RSVPs, like, all of that stuff in one place, which will make your experience less stressful and more enjoyable.

Travis: And listen, trust us. That's what you want. Less stressful, more enjoyable, you heard it here first. So, start your free wedding website, and also, get \$50 off your registry on Zola. So go to Zola.com/shmanners. One more time, that's Zola.com/shmanners.

[gentle music plays]

Renee: Well, Alexis, we got big news.

Alexis: Uh-oh.

Renee: Season 1, done.

Alexis: It's over.

Renee: Season 2, comin' at you hot!

Alexis: Three years after [laughs] our season 1.

Renee: Three and a half. Three and a half. Technically almost four years.

Alexis: All right. All right.

Renee: And now, listen. Here at Can I Pet Your Dog?, the smash hit podcast, our seasons run for three and a half years, and then at season 2, we come at you with new, hot co-hosts named you.

Alexis: Hi, I'm Alexis. [laughs]

Renee: [laughs] And we also have, uh, future of dog tech.

Alexis: Yeah.

Renee: Dog news.

Alexis: Dog news.

Renee: Celebrity guests.

Alexis: Oh, big shots.

Renee: We'll not let them talk about their resume.

Alexis: Nope, only the dogs.

Renee: Only the dogs. I mean, if ever you were gonna get into Can I Pet Your Dog...

Alexis: Now's the time.

Renee: Get in here!

Alexis: Every Tuesday.

Renee: At MaximumFun.org.

[music plays]

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]

Travis: Okay. We've got some questions here. Once again, as you might image, lots of a—lots of questions.

Teresa: Oh yeah!

Travis: On this episode, family vacation. This is from... uh, I'm gonna say, Gazi? Sure.

"How do you politely ask to be alone for a bit on longer vacations?"

Teresa: Ohh...

Travis: This is, I would say, probably the question we got the most.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: Um, and—and listen, yes. There is something that happens where like, you can all be in your house at home and like, in different rooms, and that's fine, and then you go somewhere, and now it's weird to be in different rooms. Right? Because like, the whole point is supposed to be family time, so—

Teresa: Now, that's not something I ever felt until I joined your family—

Travis: That is true.

Teresa: Because my family... it's very common for us all to be in the house in separate rooms doing our thing, and—

Travis: Even on vacation?

Teresa: Yeah! Totally. Even on vacation. I have memories of, uh, like, my older sister would be out on the balcony reading, and, uh, my mom would take my younger sister and I to the pool—

Travis: And your dad would be out wrestlin' sharks.

Teresa: [laughing] No. He—he would probably be, uh, like, maybe grocery shopping or just kind of walkin' the grounds or whatever. Like—

Travis: Surveying his lands.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Um, I would say probably—this is one of those circumstances where I think, explicitly say what you need. If you say like, "Hey, I'm gonna go lay down for a bit." Like, I think the inclination would be like, "Maybe I should sneak off?" But when you sneak off, people will come looking for you.

Teresa: People come looking.

Travis: But if you say like, "Hey, I'm just—I'm gonna go read by myself for a little bit," right? It doesn't have to be a big explanation. I don't think you have to say like, "Because I need some time alone," right?

Because I think that that is something that is very easily to infer offense into, as opposed to what you need, which is, "I need to go read by myself for a little bit."

Teresa: I think also, one of the things that has really helped our family vacation experiences is planning out the day to have together time and to have separate time.

Travis: Yes. Expectation helps so much.

Teresa: So, Travis is really good at making a kind of schedule where we do things where it says, "We're gonna meet here at this time to go down to the beach!" Right?

Travis: Uh-huh.

Teresa: And then there's some beach time, and it kind of tapers off. And then we say we're gonna have lunch in the kitchen at this time, right? So there might—

Travis: I mean, I don't get that gran—"And then we'll all go to the bathroom at this time!"

Teresa: No—[laughs] But you—but you know what I mean.

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: Where there's like, a meeting time. An activity.

Travis: Yeah. So that way it's like, if you wanna come, come. If you don't, you don't, but everyone has the option to go at that point.

Teresa: Right, everyone knows what's going to be happening, or what we hope to happen. Um, but they're kind of... I like it when you make the itinerary kind of

open ended, so like, people can go beach as long as they want to, and then maybe go back to the house and hang out and do something else until lunch, right?

Travis: Yeah, 'cause—Gazi also asked about like, how do you not go to things like, that people wanna do. Like, if they wanna go shopping and you don't. I think the answer is just say like, "Well, I'm gonna pass on shopping, but I'll meet you all later there for dinner," or whatever, right?

Teresa: Absolutely.

Travis: So then it's like, "Okay, cool. We know what's up, we know where everyone's gonna be, and we'll meet up later." Right? I think it's all about expectation, because this is the other thing, right? Sometimes, it's very easy if someone goes, "No, I don't really wanna go shopping," that then you say, "Oh, it'll be fun!" 'Cause you want everyone to participate and have fun.

Where if you say, "Hey, rather than shopping, you know what I want to do? I would love to just sit by the pool and read my book," right? "Oh, okay, they'll have fun doing that." As opposed to feeling like... because as a person who makes itinerary, if I said we're gonna go shopping and someone's like, "I don't wanna go shopping," I would then feel like, "Well now I need to think of something else that everyone wants to do," as opposed to you saying, "What I wanna do is sit by the pool and read my book." And now I know, "Oh, that's what they want to do."

Teresa: Or, you know, like you said earlier where it's like, "I'm not gonna join on this one, but I'll catch you guys later for this other one."

Travis: Uh, this is from... let's see. From Nick.

"My whole family is sharing a beach house this year. Half of us don't drink for religious reasons, and the other half do. My sister asked us not to drink in front of her kids, but staying together makes that hard. Can I politely say that I'm still going to drink on my vacation?"

I think that there's probably a compromise here. Like, is it just... here's what I think you need to follow up question with your sister. Is it that your sister does not want you or anyone to be inebriated around the kids, or is it just that the sister doesn't want the kids to see someone drinking?

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: 'Cause you could use—

Teresa: I think that's a good clarification to ask for.

Travis: —you could use a cup or glass or whatever that makes it, you know, hard to discern what you are drinking, and probably would be fine, but if it's like, "I don't want my kids around drunk people," I think that that is A) perfectly reasonable, um, if that's what their deal is, and B) once again you could say, "I will not get drunk around your kids." Right?

Like, there's a difference between me having a beer versus like, slamming 8 shots of Jose Cuervo or whatever. But once again, I think that rather... if it is an important question to you, right, I think it is worth follow up questions, and if your sister is adamant about it, then I think you need to, uh—I think you need to agree to that.

Teresa: Here's another idea. Um, find out what activities the children will be with everyone.

Travis: That's also a good comp.

Teresa: Right?

Travis: Mm-hmm.

Teresa: So, if there are times where, you know, we're all going out to dinner, or we're all going to the beach, maybe those are times where you could abstain, and still make your sister happy, but then if there are times where people are splitting off, or it's like, just chill time after dinner, then that might be a time where you could enjoy a drink.

Travis: I agree.

Teresa: Because you are not interacting directly with the children.

Travis: Uh, this is from Scotty.

"How do you maintain a schedule of activities while simultaneously allowing your family to make suggestions once you have arrived? It seems like a tightrope situation."

All right. Lean in, Scotty. Here's Travis.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Here is the thing. Let me tell you something that will make vacations so much better, for you—

Teresa: Or has made our vacations—

Travis: —has made ours. This is my life hack. Unless it's something that you've invested money in, like if you've bought, say—bought tickets to an amusement park that each cost you like, a hundred bucks or whatever, right? If there is something that you planned on doing that, when the time comes to do it, it's no longer conducive, don't. Do it.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Right? Because there is a th—like, you paid \$10 for a tour or something, right? And on the day your supposed to go to the tour, everyone seems like, "Yeah, you know what?"

Teresa: Everyone's tired and sunburned and doesn't wanna do it.

Travis: "Now that we've reached it—" you'll have more fun not doing than you will making everyone do a thing they don't wanna do.

Teresa: I believe that's called a schlep.

Travis: Yeah. So just call, and cancel.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Right? Like, that's the—this is the thing, is when it comes down to it, this is—I always got into this mindset of, the fun of vacation comes from doing the things you planned on doing, when actually, the fun of vacation is having fun on

vacation? So when it comes down to it, the decision to make in the moment is not what is on the plan, but what will be the most fun thing to do, here.

Um, and that—so, also, another thing I have taken to doing that I might suggest, is to have one tent pole plan for the day, like, "We're gonna go check out this arcade on this day," or whatever. "We're gonna go mini golfing on Friday." And then the rest of the day is question mark, right? So that way if you get there and someone's like, "Ooh, I just saw this thing for, you know, a horse... show," or whatever. "Okay, cool! Let's do that after lunch," right? Like—

Teresa: Also, Travis is really good about stacking plans. So like, on the first day everybody's gung ho and we're gonna have so much fun and do all the things! Maybe you plan three things that day.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: But as the trip goes on, people get tired, people, you know, start to relax a little more, they wanna spend more time kind of lounging, so you plan less activities as the week or whatever goes on, because it keeps it so that we're not, like, I said, schlepping to things.

Travis: Yes. Listen, day one, when you arrive, you just wanna plan dinner. Maybe the dinner's at the place you're staying, maybe you go somewhere. I don't know. Day two: everyone's ready to go. That's where you're gonna plan a big event in the morning, then lunch, maybe nap if you all are nappers, and then maybe two small events in the evening, and dinner. Okay. Then—

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: —day—day three—

Teresa: Okay, you don't have to stack a whole vacation for us.

Travis: Day three, nothing in the morning. Nothing in the morning. That's "Let's relax" time. "Let's do whatever we want" time. But then, eve—okay.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: Um, here's another question. Uh, let's see. This is, uh, from Study Blade.

"What if everyone but one or two members of the family want to go to a certain restaurant? Should those who don't want that type of food go to another restaurant? Should they do what they want, because vacation, or stick with the family unit?"

Uh, so... if—let's say it 8 people. 6 of them wanna go for Mexican, 2 would rather have like, burgers, right? I think you have two completely viable options. What I would do is say, "Well, what if we go to Mexican tonight, and burgers tomorrow?" Right?

Teresa: Sure.

Travis: Or you can say, "Cool, well, how about we go there and you go there, and then we meet up for dessert at this ice cream place," right?

Teresa: Both of those good options.

Travis: Yeah. I mean, that's the thing. Once again, being together... if being together means people being unhappy, if doing your own thing separately means people being happy, I always endorse the happy option.

Teresa: And I think that this goes actually hand in hand with the stacking activities idea. Like you said for the second day, everybody's super like, jazzed to go, right? So maybe that's a good day for the compromise, of for lunch we'll do Mexican, for dinner we'll do burgers, right?

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: But towards the end, when people maybe are tired, or they're, you know, missing their own bed or something like that, maybe that's a good day for you to split off and do your own thing.

Travis: And listen, there's always Cheesecake Factory.

Together: They have everything.

Travis: You—it's—that is a good last day of din—like, last day dinner with the big family, 'cause there's something for literally everyone, by which I mean everyone in the world could order one thing, and there would still be leftover things.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Um, but also, like, options... you know, but not just options of like, restaurants, but if someone's like, "Oh, I don't wanna go to that place." Maybe have 'em look at the menu, 'cause it might be they'd be surprised what's on the menu. So I always share menus rather than just saying the name of the place. I pull up the menu on my phone and say, "Is there something here you'd wanna eat?"

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: Um, this is from Matteas. Matti—Matthias. Matthias, I'm sorry, you even spelled it out in your username.

"Who has the rightful domain over the aux cord?" And I assume here you mean like, as you're driving there, or just like, when you're there listening to stuff? The person driving.

Teresa: The person driving. We've talked about this. Uh, for—

Travis: Within reason.

Teresa: For our car Shmanners, right. So, um, I think that it's about time limits, right?

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: And—

Travis: 'Cause I could listen to podcasts—

Teresa: All day.

Travis: —the whole way there.

Teresa: The whole way there.

Travis: I like listening to people talk while I'm driving, 'cause it makes me not pay attention to how long the drive is taking, where if I listen to music it's like, "There have been 30 songs playing! It's been forever!"

Teresa: I'm more of a song person. Uh, I like to listen to the music and just kind of, you know, bop and chill. But, so what we normally do is, uh, the driver gets to pick first. So the driver says, "Okay, I'm gonna do... Blank Check," or whatever.

Travis: Yes, I love Blank Check Podcast.

Teresa: You love Blank Check Podcast.

Travis: Highly recommend.

Teresa: Um, "I'm gonna listen to that, and then if we maybe stop for lunch, or for gas, that's when it's a very natural time to switch to something." So I would say, at that point, that's when maybe the copilot, uh, the first mate—[laughs]

Travis: Mm-hmm, yes?

Teresa: The navigator, should chime in a little bit and say, "We've been listening to podcasts for a while. Can we switch to music for a few hours?"

Travis: I also recommend start with music, and then as everyone starts to fall asleep in the car, drift off and do their own thing—'cause that's the thing. When you're driver, you can't do that! You can't start readin' a book!

Teresa: Yeah, that's true.

Travis: You can't pull out, you know, your Nintendo Switch and play. Once everybody starts doing their own thing, maybe an hour in, that's where you're like, "Hey, is it cool if I—you're all listening to your own things now, and playing on your phones, is it cool if I switch to a podcast?"

Also, also, in a perfect world, you could find a perfect bulls eye that is right in the middle of what everyone wants. I highly recommend, if you're looking for like, an audio book that everyone will love, the, uh—basically anything by John Hodgman, but start at the beginning. Uh, Areas of My Expertise, listen through. Even Vacationland.

He has a great reading voice, there's funny guests on it, the book is entertaining without having to be something that you pay super careful close attention to, so

everyone can kind of zone in and out of it as they're doing their own thing, and the books are just really good.

Teresa: They're really good books!

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: And if you're really into audio books, um, Travis has made me listen to a lot of Poirot.

Travis: Poirot. [whispers] So good.

Teresa: [laughs] But you do have to pay a little more attention to that.

Travis: Also, we just listened to this one that was Stephen Fry's, uh, Secrets of the Victorian Era, I think?

Teresa: Yeah!

Travis: It was like, through Audible, so it was more like individual episode, but really well produced, really good soundscapes—

Teresa: He also has a good reading voice.

Travis: Yes. And very interesting! Like, if you're li—okay. If you're listening to Shmanners, you would be interested in The Secrets of the Victorian Era as read by Stephen Fry on Audible.

Teresa: Some of them are adult content.

Travis: Yes, they do give warnings in the beginning, so like... I would say 10 and under maybe wouldn't be—none of 'em are super risqué, but, uh, maybe more 13, maybe PG-13, some episodes? But they will tell you on each episode, like, if there is a warning at the beginning of it.

Uh, this is from Mars. "When is it okay to bring a significant—" Oh! Okay. Mars, I promise I'm gonna answer this question, but you have just reminded me that I promised we'd talk about Teresa and my's first vacation.

Teresa: Ah, yes.

Travis: So, we'd been dating, uh, I would say about 9 months, at that point?

Teresa: Yeah, about a year.

Travis: So we'd been living together for six. [laughs]

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Um, and we went to Sandusky, Ohio, where Cedar Point is. Um, and we went to Cedar Point, which was great, but—

Teresa: It was very hot, so I think that we only did like, up until lunch, right?

Travis: We did what we do best, which is to go early and leave early.

Teresa: That's right!

Travis: So we got there right when the park opened, and we left at 2:30, and we'd done everything we wanted to do.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: And we also had the plan of like, "We'll leave and get lunch and come back," so we didn't like, have lunch at noon, and then time kept passing and we're like, "Well, we're not gonna stay longer, so we'll just wait to have lunch." So by the time we left, we were starving!

Teresa: [laughing] So hungry.

Travis: And we went to like, a buffet restaurant, and just gorged.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Uh, and then I believe we went back to our hotel and slept.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: For the rest of the day! Um—

Teresa: And, you know, chilled. But then, we also... Travis and I are kind of, um—

Travis: Nerds?

Teresa: Nerds. And so we also went to... there's a carousel museum there.

Travis: Yeah!

Teresa: Where you get to ride an original carousel.

Travis: And it's so fast!

Teresa: [laughing] It's so fast! I couldn't believe how—like, he had—we have a picture of me holding on like, white-knuckling—

Travis: Yes!

Teresa: —on this carousel horse, because it's—

Travis: You never think of a carousel as a thrill ride, but... y'all?

Teresa: This thing went like, 20 miles an hour. It was so fast! [laughs]

Travis: It booked! Uh, and we also went to... right by there there was... I think it's Lime Village?

Teresa: Yeah, there's a historical park, um, that has several outbuildings and a main house—

Travis: And you can tour the village and the tour the house and—

Teresa: And a costumed tour, and—

Travis: And listen, like we said, nerds.

Teresa: We're nerds.

Travis: Loved it. Highly recommend. That was our first family vacation together. Um, so, this is from Mars.

"When is it okay to bring a significant other on a family vacation?"

Teresa: When... your family says it's okay! [laughs]

Travis: Yeah, I—I think that... this is one of those circumstances where it needs to be discussed with the family—

Teresa: Before.

Travis: —before you discuss with the significant other, because there are many factors that play into this that have nothing to do with how your family feels about your significant other, right? How much space is there? Additional cost of like, tickets, plane tickets, uh, amusement park tickets, food costs, um, you know. All of that stuff. And, like, would they share a room with you? Do they need their own space? Like, there's lots of discussion to happen here.

Teresa: Lots of logistics.

Travis: Right.

Teresa: Yeah. And so, try not to take it as an affront to your significant other if the answer is no, we only have so much budgeted, we, uh—even if they paid their own way, we'd still have to, you know, rent a bigger car, 'cause we don't have enough room for them, like, all this kind of stuff.

Travis: My advice is, if you would like to start bringing your significant other along on family vacations, find a short one, like a weekend trip, rather than like, "We're goin' on a week and a half, you know, European vacation," right?

Teresa: And plan it yourself!

Travis: Right.

Teresa: So that you plan the—the weekend trip and say, "Me and my SO are going to a cabin! We would love for our family to come!"

Travis: Or, or even if you, you know, maybe you're still living with your family and don't have the means to do it on your own, or you're too young to do it. Say like, "I would like us all to go on a trip so that you can get to know them," right?

So that way the purpose of the trip is them getting comfortable going on the trip. Because that's the thing, is like—

Teresa: And not—not like, a clinger-on situation.

Travis: Right, that's the thing is—I, especially as a parent now... and this isn't like a [goofy deep voice] "My daughter won't date!" [normally] I don't care. This is more of a [goofy deep voice] "I like to make plans!" [laughs]

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Thing where it's like, you're adding a new element in that adds an element of chaos to this that I don't know how to plan around. And a little bit of easing into get us more comfortable like, "Oh, okay, cool. We can plan around this. We can figure this out," right?

And I think that's true of bringing a best friend, bringing a significant other, whatever, you know? In anything with like, "But I don't know how that will go. I don't know, maybe we have different ideas of how vacation is meant to be spent." Like, yeah.

Teresa: Sure.

Travis: There's lots of different things. I think that easing in is the way to go. Now, we're about to wrap up, but Teresa, you said you had some do's and don't's. Is there anything we haven't hit yet?

Teresa: Well, I think that the big thing that we haven't hit is, wherever you go, there are usually people of authority who are happy to offer assistance. Don't—don't forget that you can ask the concierge at a hotel. You can ask—there might be a ranger station.

Travis: Even if it's just like, your Airbnb, you can ask the owner of the Airbnb.

Teresa: Exactly! Take advantage of the people that are knowledgeable around you to help make your vacation good.

Travis: Which includes the Internet.

Teresa: Includes the Internet too!

Travis: One thing that my—I—when we leave... even when we're here in Cincinnati, I rely so heavily upon Yelp that it is silly. I think my two most visited websites when we travel are Yelp and Atlas Obscura.

Teresa: [laughs] So, do take advantage of those people. They are there to help you, um, and, you know, if nothing else, if you stop at a rest stop, they usually have that wall of brochures. Don't be afraid to peruse! See something that maybe you wouldn't have seen. I think that one point we did that—did we do that in Sandusky? We—

Travis: Yeah, that's how we found Lime Village.

Teresa: That's how we found Lime Village! We stopped at a rest stop and we were like, "Oh, hey, look at this!" And there was like, an Amish place, and there was like, all kinds of cool stuff that we would never have known if we hadn't kind of tried to, uh, broaden our horizons.

Travis: I mean, two of the things... when we were on My Brother, My Brother, and Me tour, we went to the Wisconsin Dells, 'cause we saw like, roadside signs, and we were like—

Teresa: A road sign, and we were like, "We're gonna go there." [laughs]

Travis: "Okay!" [laughs] Justin and I were sitting in the front two seats, and Justin and I were just making eye contact like, [under his breath] "We're goin' there, right? Okay."

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: And so we're like, "Yeah, we need to stop for gas!" [imitates tires squealing] Uh, and then that also happened two years ago when we went on vacation with Justin and the Smirls, which is my favorite band—

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: —and we ended up going to the Pirate—Pirate's Voyage? Was that it? It was like, a stunt pirate dinner show, and it was just like, "There are signs, sure." And then it—it was great! We had a great time.

Teresa: Buttercup is now in my lap giving me gentle kisses.

Travis: That is true. So I would say, yes. I agree. Say yes to doing weird fun things on vacation.

Teresa: And I also would like to give a shout out to our, uh, research assistant, Alex, um, who amassed so much more research than I could ask for—oh, Butter—oh, okay.

Travis: Buttercup is movin' the microphone now!

Teresa: Okay, all right, here we go. Um, and in fact gave an idea for another one. Let's do a vacation part 2 with camping.

Travis: Okay, cool!

Teresa: And—

Travis: Not—not next week!

Teresa: Not next week.

Travis: Next week you will get to hear our episode on Bob Ross that we recorded in Nashville, and then we'll probably have to skip the next week, but then... or, then you'll hear the camping, then we'll skip a week. Okay, cool, got it.

Teresa: Okay, great. Um, and I would like to... [laughs] One of the little tidbits that she, uh, she found was that Stalin actually outlawed the book *The Grapes of Wrath* in Russia, because he didn't want his people to realize that even the poorest of Americans could still own a car.

Travis: Well, there you go.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Okay. So that's gonna do it. Thank you, Alex. Uh, also thank you Maximum Fun, our podcast home. Go check out Maximumfun.org to find out all the other amazing shows there. Uh, speaking of websites, Travismcelroy.com is beautiful and revamped, thank you Eric Enlow for your work on it, and thank you Alice Flanders for your work on it. Uh, if you go there, you will also find my San

Diego Comic Con 2019 schedule, um, and a bunch of other cool stuff. Uh, if you are a fan of the Cincinnati Underground Society shows, you can get a lifetime membership there, which also includes some—

Teresa: I don't know what that is. I've never heard of that.

Travis: Exactly. You'll also find some bonus swag if you get that membership. Um, and you can go to mcelroy.family, click on "tours" to see where we're gonna be for the book show. Uh, The Adventure Zone book comes out—Book Two of The Adventure Zone graphic novel comes out, I believe, July 17th. That's like, in six days! So you should go preorder it. theadventurezonecomic.com. It's so good, I'm so proud of it, you're gonna love it. There it is.

Teresa: We're also always droppin' merch, so check that out too.

Travis: Yeah. But please come to the book show, especially if you're in LA. Please come to the LA book show, we need to sell more tickets to that.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Uh, and I'll see you at San Diego, and you can also go to mcelroy.family and click on "tours" to find out where else we're gonna be. Uh, mcelroymerch.com, check that out. What am I forgetting?

Teresa: Uh, we always thank Brent "brentalfloss" Black for writing our theme music, which is available as a ringtone where those are found. Also, thank you to Kayla M. Wasil for our Twitter thumbnail art, and our Twitter handle is @shmannerscast. Um, and that's where we got a lot of our questions for our episodes, but if you would like to submit a topic, please email us, shmannerscast@gmail.com.

Also, thank you to the newly christened Bruja Betty Pinup Photography, former Keely Weis Photography, for our cover banner of our fan run Facebook group called Shmanners Fanners. Go ahead and join that group if you like to give and get others, uh, Shmannerly advice from other fans. Uh, but don't submit topics, because it's very hard to search and find, so submit those topics to the email.

Travis: Uh, and that's gonna do it for us, so join us again next week!

Teresa: No RSVP required!

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

Teresa: Manners, Shmanners. Get it?

[theme music plays]

[chord]

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