

## Shmanners 142: Sidewalks

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**Travis:** [exaggerated New York accent] Hey, I'm walkin' here!

**Teresa:** Shouldn't you say "Podcasting here?"

**Travis:** It's *Shmannas*!

[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:** I want you to know I thought about doing "[exaggerated New York accent] Eh, hello internet, it's me, your husband host, Travis McElroy!" but I'm already losing it, and I'm... melting.

**Teresa:** Well, but you just—but you just did it. [laughs quietly]

**Travis:** Yeah, I was gonna do it for the intro, though! And then—

**Teresa:** But you *did* just do it for the intro!

**Travis:** No I didn't! I said the intro normal, and then I said—

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** —"In an alternate universe, this is how it would've sounded if it had done it for the intro." But th—once we finish the "Hello, my dove." "Hello, dear." That's—we're post-intro now, and we're in the episode.

**Teresa:** Okayyy.

**Travis:** Listen, we're in core episode territory at that point. How are you?

**Teresa:** I'm alright.

**Travis:** [mic thumps] Yeah, we just—whoa, I hit the micromophone!

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** Um, we just got done decorating cookies with our two-year-old.

**Teresa:** [through laughter] She did... a lot of decorating the plate

**Travis:** Yeah, yeah. There was a lot of the—

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** —one of the things that's really, uh, surprising—there are phrases that I have had to say to my two-year-old that I never expected to have to say to a human being. Like, "Please don't try to ride the dog like a horse."

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** Um, "Please... keep your hands out of your diaper." And also, like, "No, put the sugar on the cookie!"

**Teresa:** Yeah.

**Travis:** Like... I don't know why—and then she wouldn't eat it! She just wanted to keep decorating! We kept saying, like, "Do you want to eat it?" And she'd shake her head no and just keep sprinkling! And that was the fun part.

But anyways, cookies were had. Too much—too much sugar was consumed. Everything's fine.

**Teresa:** [through laughter] It's true.

**Travis:** Um, so this week we're talking about sidewalks.

**Teresa:** Because *you* wanted to know.

**Travis:** Oh, yes. I'm gonna look this up. Thank you for reminding me, 'cause someone suggested it, but it's interesting. It's a great topic, and I will also say, this is maybe, like, the most audience questions we've gotten on a topic in a while.

So, like, this is something people are definitely kind of hungry to talk about, and maybe it's indicative, 'cause if you had asked me, you know, a year ago, I would have said, like, "Well, it's such a mundane topic. What is there to talk about?"

But when you think about it, mundane just means, like, common? And common means that a lot of people—it applies to them and affects them every day.

**Teresa:** That's true!

**Travis:** So this question, um, came from Andy. Andy suggested sidewalks, so thank you very much, Andy.

Um, and—and—yeah! This is the kind of thing that—once Andy suggested it and I started thinking about it, I was like, "Yeah, you know what?" I have a lot of thoughts on this!"

**Teresa:** Alright! Well—

**Travis:** But where—where do you even begin with, like, the history of something like that?

**Teresa:** I shall begin—

**Travis:** [gasps]

**Teresa:** —as I am wont to do, in the Victorian Era!

**Travis:** Yes, when—when the majority of our modern day concepts of etiquette, uh, sprang forth!

**Teresa:** No only is it—is it just about that, but, like, sidewalks in general. People just walked in the street.

**Travis:** Yeah, I guess. You know, if—if—if carriages aren't comin' and horses aren't comin', probably not so worried about sidewalks!

**Teresa:** Right. But starting in the, uh—in the Victorian Era, this is when the promenade—we've talked about the promenade and—and, you know, being debuted into society, into court, started, like, showing up. And so sidewalks were something that people started using instead of the streets.

**Travis:** Huh. You know, I bet that—as I have often said on this, I am not a—an anthropologist or—I almost said a socialist, when I meant to say sociologist, but—

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** —I would be willing to bet that there's something to do with, like... you know, it's a thing you see a lot in etiquette and fashion where, like, thing—the pendulum swings, right? And, like, sometimes being tan is in fashion, 'cause it shows, like, you have time to lay around in the sun. But then other times being pale is in fashion, 'cause it shows you don't have to go outside if you don't want to.

I imagine that there was probably a time where, like, going from place to place—you know, you talk about carriages and, like, those, like, chairs that you would carry people on and stuff—

**Teresa:** Sedan chairs.

**Travis:** Right. There was probably something about, like, the less time you were visible, the more fashionable it was to then, like—well, if—

**Teresa:** Being seen.

**Travis:** Right. If I'm wearing this, I want to be seen, and if I'm wearing this fancy outfit, I don't wanna do that in the dirt and horse manure of the street!

**Teresa:** Mm-hmm.

**Travis:** I wanna do it in the dirt and horse manure of the sidewalk.

**Teresa:** [laughs] So, um, according to *Castle's Household Guide*, which was a book written about Victorian life in, uh, 1869, a lot of the onus of the kind of, um, manners of the sidewalk were put on the lady.

**Travis:** Really? I thought you were gonna say the dude.

**Teresa:** No.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** Um, so if a young woman should see a gentleman friend and felt she couldn't ignore him... which is strange to me... um, she would have to take the initiative and offer her hand. Um, then the gentleman would wait for the lady to recognize him before lifting his hat, and it would have to be more than just the—the brim touch nod that we are used to.

Um, and he had to use the hand furthest from her, and then if she did offer her hand, the gentleman had to turn to walk with the lady to speak with her instead of stopping.

Um, above all else, the conversation itself had to be reserved, because, quote, "Strict reticence of speech and conduct should be observed in public without loud talking or animated discussions," end quote.

**Travis:** Now, listen. This all sounds fairly, you know, restrictive and—and structured, as so much of Victorian Era etiquette does.

**Teresa:** Mm-hmm.

**Travis:** But on the other hand, I also look at this, and I think that it's interesting thinking about it in terms of the onus being on—when we're speaking here, the female in these... restrictions, because it says, like, if she's not familiar with him, he can't, like, greet her and be overly familiar with her.

**Teresa:** Correct.

**Travis:** And so it does kind of reserve the power of, like, "I don't think I need to acknowledge this person," and keep walking.

**Teresa:** Mm-hmm. Um, and also, if this lady happened to be unmarried, uh, they would not be permitted in public without an escort, so there would already be someone with her.

Um, and it also—etiquette at this time made it so that young ladies weren't supposed to be looking around or stopping to chat in places that was, quote, "Below their status."

**Travis:** Uh-huh.

**Teresa:** Um, so it's not like you would just go for a walk and serendipitously meet people in the park. It was all arranged.

**Travis:** Okay. So we're talking about here if you ran in to someone and you were literally, like, heading somewhere else, you weren't going to, like, hang out at the park and hope you ran into people.

**Teresa:** Correct.

**Travis:** It was like, "Well, I was on my way to... I don't know, church or whatever." And you would—

**Teresa:** Or to pay a call. We've talked about calling cards.

**Travis:** Right. And so that's why if you encounter someone you don't stop, right? It's like, well, you can walk along with me.

**Teresa:** Mm-hmm.

**Travis:** Um, that's interesting.

**Teresa:** Um, one of the things—I mean, you talk about—meet people at the park—

**Travis:** I will also say, now, this is a thing that happens to me if I run into somebody and I'm on my way somewhere. I feel so rude saying, like, "I can't stop—like, I'm already late!" So I like the idea of, like, "If you want to talk to me you have to walk with me. We have to do, like, an Aaron Sorkin walk and talk."

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** "Cause I'm on my way to this thing."

**Teresa:** I mean, you talked about just kind of meeting whoever at the park. This was called cutting. Um, where you stared directly at someone that you knew with no sign of recognition, right? This is what Castle called the most ill-mannered act possible to commit in society.

**Travis:** To—wait, hold on. Say it again. You stare at someone without any—so it's like, "I'm making eye contact with you, but I'm not going to offer my hand or do any of the things of, like, 'Hey, I know you! We had a whole conversation at that party that week.'"

**Teresa:** That's one way of putting it. Also, if I say, um—I'm—okay. Let's—let's do a little roleplay here. I am a lady walking down the street. You are a man—

**Travis:** What people can't see at home is Teresa is literally acting this out with her hands and it's the cutest thing I've ever seen. Go on.

**Teresa:** You, uh—you think that you know me. I don't know you. So I don't offer my hand, and you... continue to stare at me.

**Travis:** [gasps] Oh, okay! So it's like me going, "Hmm..." and, like—

**Teresa:** It's like forcing someone to think "Oh, do I recognize you? Do I know you? Have we been introduced? I'm not quite sure if we have."

This is how a lot of, like, up and comers, right, would just kind of dart into society and think that they could just kind of, like—like I said, kind of weasel their way in, right?

**Travis:** Once again—see, this is another thing where this seems restrictive. But, like, the number of times where, like, someone makes eye contact with you and you're like, "Do I—" and you're in your head thinking, "Do I know them?" Like—

**Teresa:** Mm-hmm.

**Travis:** Ohh.

**Teresa:** And they go through all of the, you know, the... the motions of "Yes, we *do* know each other," but you really *don't* know them. And, like—

**Travis:** This would also seemingly cut out the whole, like, "Were you waving at me, or waving at them?"

**Teresa:** Hmm...

**Travis:** "[close to the mic] Which one of us were you waving at?"

**Teresa:** Mm-hmm. And then there's a whole separate sort of different, like rules for taking the arm of someone that you are walking with on the sidewalk. Um, so in the evening, whenever safety would require, a gentleman should give a lady his arm. Um, and the way that the arm is presented is the man keeps his forearm parallel to the ground and moves his elbow out so that a lady can hook underneath and around the arm.

**Travis:** I assume while leaving your arm full enough out so you're not, like, pulling them in close to your side.

**Teresa:** Correct.

**Travis:** You're offering—okay.

**Teresa:** Yes. Just the arms should be touching. No bodily contact other than arms.

**Travis:** Mm-hmm.

**Teresa:** Um, and a gentleman may take—

**Travis:** You gotta leave room for the Christmas spirit.

[pauses]

**Teresa:** A gentleman may take two ladies upon his arms, but under no circumstances should a lady take the arms of two gentleman.

**Travis:** Ooh.

**Teresa:** Although I did read that this—

**Travis:** Because then if one of 'em tripped, it would tear her in half.

**Teresa:** [laughs] I did read that this was common practice in Ireland, but maybe that was just British slander.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** Um—

**Travis:** It should be noted, though—like, as is so often the case, we are sticking with kind of an Anglo view, which I'm sure if we looked at, like... you know, the history of, like, Japanese or, I don't know, um... Canadian? I don't know. Other—other cultures walking down sidewalks.

**Teresa:** I do have some other cultures—

**Travis:** Oh, great!

**Teresa:** —as far—after I go through the Victorian. Um, and then one of the other things is, as far as even taking arms goes, Miss Manners wrote in the Chicago Tribune [hesitantly] in the... 60's?

**Travis:** Sure.

**Teresa:** Yes. Um... about how it's a different behavior if you are helping a lady, maybe through an icy patch or, you know, down a dark stairwell. So that hold is more of a familiar hold, but if a gentleman is to help a lady down that dark stairwell, she is to stiffen her arm at the elbow so that he may cup the elbow in his hand and assist, steadying her that way.

**Travis:** Can you imagine a scenario in which, like, a man would be walking down, I don't know, an icy street, and she starts to fall, and in his head he's thinking, like, "[cheerfully] Well, I don't know her well enough!" [through laughter] And just, like, lets her fall down. Would that happen? To—to, like, preserve—

**Teresa:** I don't know. I don't know.

**Travis:** I don't know. Probably not, right? That would probably be, like, rude. I have to imagine that there is rarely a circumstance where it's like, "No, letting them fall is the polite thing."

**Teresa:** [muffled laughter]

**Travis:** So talk to me about some of the, uh, habits in other cultures, or in other areas.

**Teresa:** Um, so—

**Travis:** And also, I don't know if it came in your research—the reason I was surprised by you saying the thing about the onus falls on the—in the Victorian Era, on the woman, is that one of the things I thought you were going to talk about is something that...

God, it's one of those things where I can't remember if I was ever actually taught it in, like, Cotillion or something, but the idea of if you walk down the street with a lady and you're a dude, you walk on the street side with them on the inside, away from... I don't know, the danger of purse snatchers and cars and horses or whatever.

**Teresa:** Well, so that kind of flip flopped throughout history, where the perceived danger moved, right? So at first, the perceived danger was splashing from carriages or chamber pots being emptied out of windows, where the man was supposed to walk on the outside to protect the woman from the—from the splashings or whatever.

But then once the perceived danger moved to purse snatchers or burglars who may be lurking in doorways or hanging out of windows, then the man was supposed to protect the woman from the other side. So it really just depended upon, in that community and era, what was perceived dangerous.

**Travis:** [simultaneously] And in the times, or—yeah.

**Teresa:** Yeah. Um, so—

**Travis:** That's outdated now, right? Because I have many female friends in my life who I would trust to protect me instead of the other way around.

**Teresa:** [laughs] So as far as other cultures, two, uh... two places that seemed to come up again and again in my research were both Britain and Japan.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** Um, so in Britain, people drive on the left side of the road.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** And yet, it really does seem to be kind of a free for all that errs on the side of the right side of the sidewalk.

[pauses]

**Travis:** Okay. So if you're passing someone, right? You—you walk on the right—

**Teresa:** You pass on the left. So peop—slower traffic is supposed to go to the right. So, like—

**Travis:** No, I gotcha.

**Teresa:** Yeah.

**Travis:** Yeah, walk on the right side of it and pass on the left. Okay.

**Teresa:** Right. Um, but really kind of—you just have to pay attention to what's going on.

**Travis:** I wonder if that has to do with not passing towards the road.

**Teresa:** I don't know.

**Travis:** Not, like, that you wouldn't step into the road to pass them, but instead step into, like, a lawn or.. I don't know. That's why—that's why that would make sense to me. 'Cause if you were walking on the left and passed on the right, you're stepping into where traffic is coming.

**Teresa:** Mm-hmm. Uh, I mean, but in general, other places in my research point to a... the sameness as the road, whereas in London it didn't seem to be necessarily that way?

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** Um, and then the other one I said is Japan. Um, here are a few things about Japan. First of all, in escalators—I know in the US, we're taught to stand to the right if you want to stay still, and if you are passing, pass on the left.

Um, but according to my research—I'm feeling very, um, *Magic School Bus* right now—[laughs] uh, in Japan, one can stand to either side, and the passing happens in the middle.

**Travis:** Okay. That's gotta be a wide escalator!

**Teresa:** I suppose so. Or—or thin persons.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** Um, also, in Tokyo, one of the things that are very common are, uh, vending machines, or even vending cafes. But it's considered rude to walk and eat at the same time, so you have to either stand to the side and eat or drink, or put it in your bag for later. Um, which was very interesting to me, because, like, there's no... I guess I just thought that people walked and eat and drank at the same time.

**Travis:** You know what? I will say—so, I'm sure this will come up when we get to questions, but I have strong feelings about how people walk on sidewalks and on other places. I should say how they progress in sidewalks, and, like, busy convention centers and stuff. And I will say... that people who are, like, trying to eat and drink and walk move slower—

**Teresa:** It's true!

**Travis:** —and less mindful of others around them. So I'm not going to say it's *not*—I'm not going to say it's *not* rude...

**Teresa:** Mm-hmm.

**Travis:** —to eat and drink on the sidewalk here. I think people just do it more.

**Teresa:** Right.

**Travis:** Um, so, speaking of the audience questions, we're gonna get to those in a second, but first... I think we should write some thank you notes to our sponsors, don't you?

**Teresa:** Yeah!

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[theme music plays]

**Teresa:** *Shmanners* is sponsored in part this week by Bombas! Gotta tell you—

**Travis:** Yes?

**Teresa:** —when we travel and I am picking out socks, the ones I pick out every time are my Bombas socks.

**Travis:** Yeah!

**Teresa:** Here's the thing: they stay on my feet really well, because they have that arch support system, and they feel great while walking... probably faster than I normally do, in airports and on airplanes. I find that they are super soft and super comfortable, 'cause they have that great seamless toe, they have super soft cotton, and I'm not, like, worrying about my socks falling down inside my shoes.

**Travis:** Yeah. That's—one of my favorite things in this is, on paper, such a little thing. But those, like—you know the low cut socks that I really like to wear when I'm wearing tennis shoes? They have this little, like... lip, almost, on them?

**Teresa:** Yeah!

**Travis:** That keeps it from sliding down in your shoe. It's just so genius and comfy.

**Teresa:** It's really great. And while I am searching for my Bombas socks, I feel really great knowing that Bombas donates one brand new pair of socks for every pair that they sell! And to date they've sold and donated over nine million pairs.

Um, so these socks... are the ones that I always pick out when I'm traveling.

**Travis:** And you should too!

**Teresa:** You should too! Because our listeners get 20% off their first order when they go to [bombas.com/shmanners](https://bombas.com/shmanners). That's B-O-M-B-A-S.com to get 20% off your first order. One more time: [bombas.com/shmanners](https://bombas.com/shmanners), and code "shmanners."

**Travis:** Um, so I don't know if everyone here has seen, but Teresa and I got a second dog. Her name is Lilly, and she is a very good girl. And soon, we will have to build a new website called—

**Teresa:** A new site!

**Travis:** —[lillyisaverygoodgirl.com](https://lillyisaverygoodgirl.com). Now, that said, during a recording of *My Brother, My Brother, and Me* that may or may not have happened today, Justin may or may not have purchased [lillyisaverygoodgirl.com](https://lillyisaverygoodgirl.com) out from under me.

**Teresa:** [through laughter] Oh no...

**Travis:** So I am going to have to do a little bit of work on that to get that back from him, but still, when it comes time to build that website, I'm gonna do it on Squarespace! Because Squarespace is easy to use, it has super straightforward design and beautiful templates, and 24/7 award-winning customer support. And if I every wanted to, I don't know, sell Buttercup merch or Lilly merch, I could do it with their powerful e-commerce functionality. It lets you sell anything online.

Basically at this point, if you've had an idea for a website—or, you know what? Even you've just wanted to play around with website design but you've thought, "Well, I don't know anything about coding or whatever."

Do it with Squarespace! 'Cause my favorite thing in playing with Squarespace sites is you can start off really simple, right? With all the, like, drag and drop, and all that stuff. And then get into, like, adding coding stuff and embedding stuff. And doing that if you want to.

Um, so go check it out. Go to [squarespace.com/shmanners](https://squarespace.com/shmanners) for a free trial, and when you're ready to launch use the offer code "shmanners" to save 10% off your first purchase of a website or domain. Go! Check it out!

Uh, we also this week have a Jumbotron.

**Teresa:** Woo hoo!

**Travis:** It's for Shay, and it's from Bea. And Bea says:

"Hey, Shay! Just wanted to send this to say congrats on making it this far in art school! You're doing great! Everyone is super proud, and is rooting for you. I'm glad we got to meet over *The Adventure Zone* and other good, good content, and are now in a D&D game of our own! Thanks for being my best friend. Bea."

That's so nice.

**Teresa:** That *is* nice. Hey, remember when I used to play D&D, and then I had a toddler?

**Travis:** We'll get you back into it. Once she's old enough we'll get her playing, too. I also—Bea, I want you to know how hard it was for me to say the phrase "[emphatically] making it this far in art school" without saying "fart school!"

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** So, like, that's just a little behind the scenes... from me to you!

**Teresa:** What you mean is, "You're welcome."

**Travis:** You're welcome that I didn't say fart school!

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**Rachel:** Hi, this is Rachel McElroy!

**Griffin:** Hello, this is Griffin McElroy!

**Rachel:** And this is *Wonderful!*

**Griffin:** It's a podcast that we do as m—uh, we ma—we are married... and... how's the ad going so far? 'Cause I think it's going very good.

**Rachel:** [laughs] We talk about things we like every week on Wednesdays!

**Griffin:** One time Rachel talked about pumpernickel bread. It was so tight. You cannot afford to miss her talking about this sweet brown bread.

**Rachel:** We also talk about music and poems, and... you know, weather!

**Griffin:** There was one—[incredulously] *weather?*

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** One time Rachel talked about "Baby Beluga" the song for, like, 14 minutes and it b—just really blew my hair back.

**Rachel:** [laughs] So check us out on [Maximumfun.org](http://Maximumfun.org).

**Griffin:** It's a cool podcast with chill vibes. Amber is the color of our energy! Is what all the iTunes reviews say.

**Rachel:** They will now!

[music plays]

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**Janet:** Hey! It's Janet Varney of *The JV Club* podcast, and I am so excited to be joining Maximum Fun! If you're not yet familiar with *The JV Club*, it's a podcast with me and some of my favorite women—and in the summer, men—as we explore the highs and lows of our terrible teenage years into what I like to call our adult-lescence.

For example, hear Emily Heller describe her time on the national circuit for the debate team, or how Travis McElroy took over his drama class and gave his fellow students notes. Yeah, that went over great. Or let Busy Phillipps tell you how she met Sharon Stone at an Arizona toy fair!

You can join me and all my once-awkward, sometimes still awkward friends, every Thursday, by subscribing to *The JV Club* on [Maximumfun.org](http://Maximumfun.org)!

[music plays]

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**Travis:** Okay. So we've got some questions, here. Like I said, we've got a lot, so we'll see how many we can make it through.

Um, this is from Rebecca.

"How should we deal with bird scooters—" or in some places they're called Lime or whatever. It's those scooters that you, like, rent through an app and then just leave places. "—um, thinking especially how courtesy of parking affects wheelchair users?"

Yes, yes, 1000%. Like, when—one—okay, here's just some top tips. One: when you use them, you should consider them like bicycles. Don't use them on the sidewalk. Use them in a bicycle lane. They are motorized vehicles. Um, use them in the bicycle lane, not on the street.

**Teresa:** In some places it is legal to use them in the—in the sidewalk—

**Travis:** On the sidewalk, yeah.

**Teresa:** —if you find that the road gives imminent danger to yourself.

**Travis:** And if you're doing that, then you need to be aware and conscientious of others, and the same when you're parking. When you're parking, don't obstruct the sidewalk. Um, be conscientious of others. Like, it's—it's simple but, like... if you—if your schedule does not allow you time to conscientiously park your scooter, then you need to reevaluate your schedule!

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** It is too tight! So be careful. I mean, it's the same as, like... it's smaller, for sure, but I think it should be treated the same as if you were on—in a car, or a motorcycle or whatever. Be careful. Be aware. Don't zone out. *Don't* wear headphones. Be able to hear around you, and pay attention. And park conscientiously.

**Teresa:** Here's the thing: awareness starts with yourself, right? So if you model these good behaviors as far as, like you said, being aware of other people, using the bike lane, alerting your presence when, like, passing someone, all of this stuff

is gonna multiply and make the world a better place where we won't have to destroy these scooters.

**Travis:** Yeah. This question is from Sarah.

"What do I do when the people in front of me are walking too slow and taking up the whole sidewalk?"

**Teresa:** Um, so here's the thing: again, in a perfect world, someone would realize that they are blocking the sidewalk and move to single file, which when there are people around I do encourage my family and friends to do. [pauses] But... um, if you *must* pass while someone is blocking the sidewalk, you are perfectly within your rights to pass on the right through the grass.

**Travis:** Um, and this is also a circumstance. Here's the thing, folks: this might surprise you. I'm very loud.

**Teresa:** Mm-hmm.

**Travis:** And I take up a lot of space. But for some reason... when I open my mouth to say "Excuse me" to people as I walk by, no sound will come out.

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** I have no idea why that—like, I suddenly get so in my head that, like... [holding back laughter] it's—like, a—I just end up making this tiny pitiful noise. *But*, this is why—say "Excuse me" before you get to them.

**Teresa:** Mm-hmm.

**Travis:** Right? It is much—and you know what? Here's the thing: if you're like me, practice at home. 'Cause there is a big difference between "[polite tone] Excuse me!" and "[annoyed tone] Excuse me!" Right? And so—

**Teresa:** Certainly.

**Travis:** And that is—this is another one of those circumstances where I think saying it... as soon as you need to, instead of waiting and getting frustrated and then letting that frustration, like, creep into your manner. Because here's the

thing: if you're walking behind them, they may not know you're there. And you're in your head thinking "Ugh, they are being so rude!"

**Teresa:** "And they're being slow on purpose!"

**Travis:** But they don't know you're there. Whereas if you just said, "[polite tone] Excuse me!" and kept walking, they'd probably move. Right?

**Teresa:** Right.

**Travis:** And so I think... listen, I get it. I'm a fast walker. I take big steps and I have long—you know, long legs, and I *stride*. I stride confidently across the face of this beautiful planet of ours, and I get it. But you know, the thing is is, most of the time, they're not thinking about me as much as I'm thinking about them. And so I think the onus is kind of on you to say "Excuse me," and not expect them to just know you're walking behind them.

Um, this question is from Aiofe.

"How many wide is it acceptable to walk when someone else is coming from the opposite direction? What about with friends? Is it snubbing one of your friends when you make them walk behind you?"

**Teresa:** It is not snubbing. Um, ideally everyone would walk single file so that there would be two lanes passing each other on the sidewalk with ease. Um, but I do understand that there are circumstances that make it so that not everyone can do that, and so I think at most, on a wide sidewalks, you should go two by two, very close. Um, but folding in to single file when people are coming at the opposite direction doesn't mean you have to stay there forever.

If the sidewalk opens up again and no one's coming toward you, go ahead! Two by two, three by three, whatever can fit, until you find that someone needs to walk opposite or pass you.

**Travis:** Once again, be aware. You know what I mean? Like, don't—don't get so zoned out talking with each other that, you know, you miss the fact that there's a group of people walking towards you. It's that same kind of thing.

Uh, Martin asks:

"How egregious is it for someone to ride a bike on the pavement?"

I assume you mean on—on the sidewalk.

**Teresa:** Right.

**Travis:** Um—

**Teresa:** Technically, if it is legal in your municipality, it's not that egregious. They just have to make sure that they are being courteous. Um, if it is not legal in your municipality, I would say that please also be courteous to them. Perhaps they find that they are in imminent danger in the road. Um—

**Travis:** Oh, you're taking this a different way.

**Teresa:** Oh, you are?

**Travis:** See, I was going—well, I was going to say that, like—okay. Rarely do I play this card.

**Teresa:** Okay?

**Travis:** But I am going to say that as a parent, the thing that I have run into—and this happen—this—you know, this was actually true walking dogs as well, and that kind of thing. Is the problem is, if you're moving really fast on your bike, my two-year-old can, like, step to the left and kind of stumble a little bit and suddenly be in your way. So I would say that if you *are* riding a bike on the sidewalk because you need to, um, some kind of indication? You know, I think the classic is just saying, like, "On your left." Or, like, giving some kind of heads up. A bell or something?

**Teresa:** Okay.

**Travis:** Because that's the thing is, like... bikes move way faster than people walking, especially if I'm walking with—man, Bebe is slow!

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** Compared to me? Much slower.

**Teresa:** She's got tiny legs.

**Travis:** She's got those tiny little legs! And so some kind of indication of, like, "A bike is coming and I need to be a little bit more careful of my dog, or my child, or whatever. Or myself."

**Teresa:** My feet!

**Travis:** Right. So I think that if you're going to do it, if it's in heavy flow of traffic I think you just need to watch your speed and maybe make sure you give clear indications that you're there.

Um, let's see... buh buh buh buh—um, this question is, uh... [holding back laughter] oh man, I really relate to this! I'm gonna say Medius.

"How do I walk behind someone on the sidewalk without seeming like a murderer?"

**Teresa:** [laughs] I think it's about pacing. Um, if you find that you cannot pass them, I would say maybe stop or step aside for just a few seconds so that you're not directly behind them breathing down their neck.

**Travis:** That doesn't seem like something a murderer would do?

**Travis:** Um, especially—okay, there's a lot of factors here. And sometimes, you know, maybe this is in your head? But I would especially if it's, like, dark, and you're bigger than this person, and all of these things—like... it's—it's the same as, like, if a car was behind me and they made the same turn as me three times in a row. Yeah, you know what? We might be going the same location. But, like... it's weird. [laughs]

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** You know what I mean? And so that's the thing, is maybe this is all in your head, but I do the same thing. I mean, I am not a small person. Um, and so I do try to be careful about the indication I'll be giving, you know. So I either speed up or slow down or whatever so that that person doesn't think I'm *trying* to keep pace with them. Um, it's an awareness thing. I mean, that's what we're really talking about a lot here is, like, awareness.

Um, this question is from Ian, and it's very different from the rest of our questions.

"How long should we respect sidewalk chalk? When is it acceptable to walk through sidewalk chalk instead of stepping around it?"

**Teresa:** Huh. Well... I think... fresh sidewalk chalk should—

**Travis:** If someone's still working on it.

**Teresa:** —should be avoided. Um... I would say once the lines are blurred through maybe wind or rain, some sort of precipitation, I would say you are free to walk through it.

**Travis:** How pretty is it?

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** If it's just, like, some scribbling—

**Teresa:** Is it, like, hopscotch? Or, like—

**Travis:** Yeah. If it's just scribbles, go to town. But if it's like, "Oh, someone's made a canyon and it looks like it's actually a hole in the ground." Maybe don't walk through it, 'cause what if it actually *is* a hole in the ground that you've mistaken for sidewalk chalk? Did you ever think about *that?* *Ian?*

**Teresa:** And if it's hopscotch, you should do it.

**Travis:** Yeah, you should do it. [through laughter] We actually had a question about that, too. So that, uh—that answers—what is it? Oh, who—ah—Tyler's question.

Um, so we've got two more questions that I wanna hit. This is from Sailor Series—Seris? Whatever. I hope I got that right on one of my two attempts.

"How do you greet someone who's passing by on the sidewalk? What's the difference between greeting a friend walking past and greeting a stranger?"

**Teresa:** Um, so... in my research, I found that as far as, like, Victorian etiquette goes, this has been relaxed a lot in our modern society. Um, you should greet someone should you lock eyes with them. Just in the way that you're walking, if you find that you've made eye contact, a little nod, a hello, a small wave, a good morning, is really all that's necessary. No stopping, nothing like that.

Um, if you meet someone that you, you know, know and genuinely want to greet, I don't think that it's bad to shake hands, "How are you?" give maybe a hug, and then continue. What you don't wanna do is block the sidewalk for, you know, 10 or 15 minutes.

If you find that your conversation does continue, move off of the sidewalk.

**Travis:** Or say, like, "Hey—yeah, I'll walk with you!" Or "Where were you headed?" Whatever.

**Teresa:** Sure, yeah, yeah.

**Travis:** Um, I—once again, this is another one of those things—so especially once, like, we moved into a neighborhood and we'd kind of settled here for a while, I try really hard if I'm, like, out walkin' the dogs to, like, purposefully greet people, because I... once again, it's amazing how uncomfortable I am with small talk and greetings and stuff. I don't know why. I'm just not super great at it. So once again, the number of times I've looked at someone and opened my mouth to say "Good morning!" And no sound has come out as I'm just like, "[flustered mumbling]" [laughs]

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** Like, it happens a lot, at which point I just kind of nod. Like, "[unintelligible stammering]"

**Teresa:** That's—that's respectable, a nod is fine.

**Travis:** I think the thing—if you're going to stop someone and talk on the street—I'll say this from the other side. You gotta watch body language. You have to be aware of that. If they are kind of still, like, half stepping as they're talking to you, like, they probably need to—and don't say—

**Teresa:** They probably need to go.

**Travis:** —don't say "I should let you go," because that is saying "You look like you don't wanna talk to me anymore." What you should say is, like, "Well, it was great runnin' into you! I need to head on," or whatever.

**Teresa:** Right.

**Travis:** Make it about you, not about them.

**Teresa:** We love those "I" statements.

**Travis:** Yes. One more! This is from Betsy.

"When everyone has an umbrella out and you have to scoot through a crowd, do you raise your umbrella to avoid hitting people or is there another preferred technique?"

I would say yes.

**Teresa:** Yes.

**Travis:** I mean, that's the thing. If you need to walk through—or even if you're the only one with an umbrella out, it needs to be held at least above people's heads, preferably above other umbrellas if you're trying to cut—if you're trying to move through the crowd quickly.

**Teresa:** Mm-hmm.

**Travis:** Um, I would also say that if the—if the crowd is so dense and other people—maybe just close your umbrella and, like, move forward quickly til you get where you need to go, and then put your umbrella back up.

**Teresa:** Sure.

**Travis:** Um... but yeah.

**Teresa:** But you do have to do the little umbrella dance. Like, if people are passing on a sidewalk, one of you should raise your umbrella, the other one slightly tuck. And you can see as it's—as the person is heading towards you coming on, you can—

**Travis:** The importance of [Ursula impression] body language! [normal voice] As Ursula said.

**Teresa:** As Ursula said. Uh, which—and figure out which one is going to, and if you find that you cannot, and you must abandon ship, you can step off of the sidewalk. Uh, either—probably on the grass side. Uh, you wouldn't wanna step into the street in a crowded area.

**Travis:** Or store side or whatever, wherever you are.

**Teresa:** Um, so that you can let the other person pass before continuing.

**Travis:** Um, so that's gonna do it for us this week! Thank you so much, and thank you again to Andy for suggesting this episode. If you have any ideas for episodes, you can email us, [shmatterscast@gmail.com](mailto:shmatterscast@gmail.com), or you can tweet at us @shmatterscast.

Um, also, go check out our new website—well, it's every—all McElroys' new website: [themcelroy.family](http://themcelroy.family). Um, it is a hub for our shows that are on Max Fun, our shows that are not on Max Fun, our YouTube projects, our merch, everything.

**Teresa:** And we're gonna start more projects!

**Travis:** Yeah!

**Teresa:** Can you believe it?

**Travis:** It's not like a new home for any—like, nothing's moved from anywhere? It's just a lot easier to find everything, instead of it kind of being scattered across all the four, five, eighteen corners of the internet. It's all in one place, and it's really pretty.

**Teresa:** It is pretty.

**Travis:** Um, there's a squirrel in the header image that makes me really happy. He's talking—or I should say "they." I don't know. I haven't talked to the squirrel. They are talking into a microphone, and they're absolutely adorable. Uh—

**Teresa:** Travis has mentioned this squirrel to me—

**Travis:** —[whispering] I love it.

**Teresa:** —several times, just in this recording session.

**Travis:** I *love* that squirrel! I love him so much—*them*. I love them so much. I don't want to assume that squirrel's identity.

**Teresa:** They're good squirrels, Bront.

**Travis:** They are. Um, let's see. What else, Teresa? What else do we say?

**Teresa:** Well, we always thank Brent "brentalfloss" Black for writing our theme music, which is available as a ringtone where those are found.

We thank Kayla M. Wasil for our beautiful Twitter thumbnail art, and Keely Weis Photography for the banner of our fan-run Facebook group, *Shmanners* Fanners. And if you find that you have more questions about sidewalk etiquette, or really anything else, please do join that Facebook group and ask the other lovely fanners what they think you should do.

**Travis:** And I think 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?

**Travis:** Ayy!

[theme music plays]

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