

## Shmanners 147: Massage

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**Teresa:** Hey, Travis?

**Travis:** [gruff, mean voice] What?

**Teresa:** Sorry, didn't mean to rub you the wrong way...

**Travis:** It's *Shmanners*!

[theme music plays]

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

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

**Travis:** And you're listening to *Shmanners*.

**Teresa:** It's extraordinary etiquette...

**Travis:** For ordinary occasions! Hello, my dove.

**Teresa:** Hello, dear.

**Travis:** How are you?

**Teresa:** I'm doin' pretty good.

**Travis:** You a little tense?

[pauses]

**Teresa:** Yes?

**Travis:** Eh?

**Teresa:** [holding back laughter] Kind of always.

**Travis:** Well, that's true. But especially right now, we're midway through the throes of potty training. That's a whole thing in itself. We're getting ready to travel this weekend.

We're going to PodCon—which, by the way, [podcon.com](http://podcon.com), you can sign up for remote access, which means for 40 bucks, in a couple weeks you'll get recordings—uh, I believe audio recordings—of all of the panels and shows and stuff! So if you want to check that out, go to [podcon.com](http://podcon.com). Um, and, you know, just a lot goin' on! Adulthood, bills, house, adulthood. I know when I'm tense—

**Teresa:** Mm-hmm?

**Travis:** —Do you know what I like to do?

**Teresa:** What is it?

**Travis:** Well, a lot of things—nap.

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** Um, have some bourbon. But also, a massage!

**Teresa:** I do enjoy a massage. I, um, pretty much all my life have two manifestations of my anxiety. The first one is stomach issues, and the second one is muscle tension.

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Teresa:** I think that probably up until we got married, I could not be the recipient of either pedicures or foot massages because my feet were such a center of tension that it was physically painful for people to touch them.

Travis, by means of exposure, did break me of that.

**Travis:** It—uh—that m—

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** —that sounds terrible! It was just that I started very gentle foot massage, and over time, relaxed your feet. Now you can stand it.

**Teresa:** Yes. Now I can stand it, and do enjoy when Travis gives me a foot massage, so—

**Travis:** I'm—I'm the best.

**Teresa:** Thank you.

**Travis:** Um, so, tell me—we're gonna talk—I don't know if it's clear, we're talking about massage. [laughs]

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** This wasn't just, like, a weird tangent. Um... what's the best massage you've ever gotten? Do you remember?

**Teresa:** Oh... hmm...

**Travis:** Teresa and I tend to get couple's massages a lot, which is nice.

**Teresa:** Do you remember when we took our babymoon in Ojai?

**Travis:** Uh-huh.

**Teresa:** That was a really great massage.

**Travis:** Yeah, your prenatal massage, or—

**Teresa:** Yes. Um, that was a massage where—uh, yes, it was prenatal. So, they don't usually like you to lay flat on your stomach, and they do a kind of side-laying massage with, like, a pillow between your legs. Fantastic. Did love.

**Travis:** Uh, last year on the JoCo Cruise our massage was pretty good, and what I really like about it is—the massage was great, but also we were on the ocean at the time, so you had, like, this kind of natural rocking with the waves plus the massage. It was—I fell asleep.

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** It was great. Okay! So, enough farting around. Tell me more ab—well, tell me anything about, like, the history and the, you know, passage of time and such.

**Teresa:** Okay. Well, so, way back as far as 2700 BCE—

**Travis:** That's a long time ago.

**Teresa:** That's a long time ago. Um, there was a book, well known to Chinese medicine, called *The Yellow Emperor's Classic Book of Internal Medicine*, which highlighted massage as a healing technique, alongside things like acupuncture, acupressure, and herbology.

**Travis:** Okay. You know, I was about to make commentaries on effectiveness, but this isn't *Sawbones*, so cool! Sounds good.

**Teresa:** Surely isn't! Um, and really it's been—it's been part of, like, human healing, as long as there have been healers in society. So, even just a little less way back, 2500 BCE, we have found Egyptian tomb paintings that show massage therapy as part of their medical tradition as well.

**Travis:** That doesn't surprise me at all, you know? 'Cause when you think about it, like—I don't—I don't know that it's a huge logical leap that, like, if you are the type of person who likes to be touched and likes to be massaged, that, like, it's relaxing.

Like, I don't think it takes much trial and error to figure out, like, "My shoulders hurt," and then somebody's like, "Oh, they do?" and starts rubbing them and it's like, "Okay, it feels better now."

**Teresa:** And it feels almost intrinsic. Like, when something—when I perceive that Bebe is upset or hurt, I might rub her back.

**Travis:** Right.

**Teresa:** Or rub her hand, or something like that. It feels very—it feels like a kind of caring touch type deal that I know that, you know, she—I can obviously see that she enjoys, and I think in a time where there wasn't a lot of other kind of medicinal things—there definitely weren't, like, pain relievers—

**Travis:** At least not like we think of now.

**Teresa:** —not like we think of now. Maybe—I mean, I think I heard on *Sawbones* about willow bark being like aspirin? Anyway—

**Travis:** But this isn't *Sawbones*, so we don't need to know about that.

**Teresa:** This isn't *Sawbones*. [laughs] It's a way to kind of see immediate relief, immediate help.

**Travis:** Yeah, and feel immediate, too. It's like, you might take internal medicine and be like, "Is it working? Is it—" But if someone's, like, rubbing your shoulders, you can feel that. You know what I mean?

**Teresa:** Yeah. And it—

**Travis:** It feels like somebody's doing something.

**Teresa:** It surely does. Um, and so, once the Egyptians kind of spread this around, the Greeks and Romans also took that in stride.

**Travis:** Doesn't surprise me at all that those fools like to rub each other. That seems *very* Greco-Roman, doesn't it?

**Teresa:** Sure does!

**Travis:** Yeahhh.

**Teresa:** Um, but then—

**Travis:** With—with oils and such.

**Teresa:** —from the other side of the continent, 1500... 500 BC, way in there, massage therapy traditions are found in Ayurvedic medicine.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** Um, so even, like, the Sanskrit word translates to "life health" or "life science."

**Travis:** Okay! So it's kind of—

**Teresa:** Which I think is pretty cool.

**Travis:** —very much, like, everybody's doin' it.

**Teresa:** Everybody's doin' it!

**Travis:** And probably doin' it their own different way with their own different terminology, you know? That's why you have the Swedish massage—

**Teresa:** I was about to get to that—

**Travis:** [gasps]

**Teresa:** —but first let's stop in the Greek.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** Um—

**Travis:** [imitates tires screeching]

**Teresa:** —Hippocrates in—

**Travis:** [holding back laughter] I just stopped the car.

**Teresa:** [holding back laughter] Oh, thanks.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** Hippocrates, in the 5<sup>th</sup> century, prescribed friction to treat physical injuries. And probably—I mean, probably not, like—

**Travis:** I can't believe you just casually said that word, like—"Uh, fri—" ugh. I know it's not dirty, but it fee—the word friction... [through laughter] when you—I don't maybe it's 'cause I'm 10 years old, but it makes me giggle. *Friction!*

**Teresa:** Okay... which wasn't—okay. And the reason why he prescribed friction is it wasn't actually, like, tissue massage. It was more kind of like—

**Travis:** Like the heat?

**Teresa:** No, it was more like just rubbing. You know how, like, there's—

**Travis:** [giggles]

**Teresa:** —come on. There's a difference between if I ask for "Can I have a back *rub* and can I have a back *massage*," where massage feels more like the underneath, kind of manipulating the muscles, and a back rub to me feels more like the skin. You know what I mean?

**Travis:** 100%.

**Teresa:** And so I think that that's the—that's the... what is that? The separation that Hippocrates is making.

**Travis:** The distinction?

**Teresa:** Distinction.

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Teresa:** That is the word I was thinking of!

**Travis:** Took me a second, too.

**Teresa:** And then Galen as well in the 1<sup>st</sup> century BCE. Um, he was often a physician to the emperor—emperors, many emperors—and began using massage therapy to treat physical injuries and diseases.

Um... probably not, but like we said, it feels good, at least.

**Travis:** Okay. When you say probably not, you mean, probably ineffective.

**Teresa:** Probably ineffective.

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Teresa:** Yes. Okay.

**Travis:** But it does feel good. It's probably soothing.

**Teresa:** It does feel good. Um, now we can move on to the Swedish.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** So, here's the thing. We've been talking about BCE, and really there wasn't much, like... written down between then and, like, the 1700s. It was kind of just—

**Travis:** It was a little bit, kind of dark.

**Teresa:** —yeah.

**Travis:** It's kind of like the dark, dreary ages—

**Teresa:** Well, no. But, like, the Dark Ages are a—are encompassed within BCE and the 1700s, but, like—

**Travis:** Oh—see, but, like—Dim Ages. Dark Ages. Whoa, Kind of Hazy! Ages.

**Teresa:** [laughs] Sure.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** Within that spectrum. It was just—

**Travis:** I'll never forget my hazy ages in college, you know what I mean?

[pauses]

**Teresa:** Yeah.

**Travis:** That was like—

**Teresa:** Was that a joke?

**Travis:** I think that was supposed to be a drug joke, but I'm not sure.

**Teresa:** I'm not sure either.



**Travis:** I mean, it was—it wasn't—I would say it wasn't a joke. [laughs quietly]  
But I meant it to be one. Was it *close*?

**Teresa:** Mmm...

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** Alright. So... what I'm saying is, people were getting and giving  
massages, definitely. Probably—

**Travis:** In their theater classes.

**Teresa:** [laughs] Probably as part of treating something. Um, but there wasn't a  
lot of changing it up, and there weren't really any kind of, like, schools or  
whatever. And, I mean, the same goes for regular medicine. There really weren't,  
like, schools. Pretty much anyone who said they wanted to be a doctor could  
study under a doctor and become a—a "doctor." I'm putting quotes around some  
of those words.

**Travis:** That's "doktor" with a K.

**Teresa:** [laughs] The same thing goes for massage therapists.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** Um, but here we have, in the early 1800s, a Swedish doctor, gymnast,  
and educator, called Perh Henrik Ling...

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm. Developed a method of movement known as the  
Swedish Movement System, and massage was, like, the foundation of this. But it  
was also the way that... it's not just massage of the tissue. It's, like, manipulation  
of the joints and ligaments as well, so it's all kind of rolled up in that. Um, and—

**Travis:** Well, you shouldn't roll people up.

**Teresa:** [sighs] Uh, and it was the Dutchman, Johann Georg Mezger who defined  
the basic hand strokes of Swedish massage.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** So, using this Swedish Movement System, he was able to, uh, kind of parcel out the different ways that Swedish massage is used to day.

**Travis:** Okay!

**Teresa:** Um, and that's usually practiced in the Western hemisphere, as far as massage techniques go. And then there's also the Japanese massage practice of shiatsu.

**Travis:** Okay. I recognize... *both* of those.

**Teresa:** Yeah!

**Travis:** Yeah! Now what's the one where someone stands on your back? Is that a thing?

**Teresa:** I—I don't—

**Travis:** Okay. No one's ever done that to me, but I'm pretty sure I've seen it in movies. Eh, it's fine.

[pauses]

I *know* I've seen—there's some—there's a form—and somebody tweet at us and tell us what it's called—a form where somebody, like, holds on to two bars above you and, like, stands on your back, and bounces themselves with the bars and, like, uses their feet to rub your back. What is that? Okay, it's not important.

**Teresa:** Okay. Um, so this is where the point in history where the terms "masseur" and "masseuse" become common vernacular for referring to a massage therapist.

**Travis:** Yeah. Real quick, before anybody tweets at us, those are the old time terms.

**Teresa:** Yes.

**Travis:** Those are not the accepted terms anymore. Massage therapists do not like to be called "masseuse" or "masseur" or whatever. They are massage therapists, or if they have a preferred other title that's, like, on their business cards or whatever, go with that, but don't refer to people as "masseuse" or "masseur." It ain't cool.

**Teresa:** Right. Because in the early 1900s in America... I mean, like I said, there weren't a lot of, like—there weren't accredited schools in the same way that there weren't really schools for doctoring. That started to come into it, and the thing was, it began to be kind of, um, convoluted as far as massage goes.

There was some magnetism put in there and, like, animal magnetism especially? Like, the idea that to receive the benefits of massage, you don't even have to touch someone, kind of like hovering?

**Travis:** There's also another reason I have heard that those terms have gone out of fashion, is there is also um... there were people who used "masseuse" as also, perhaps, a cover for sex work.

**Teresa:** Yes.

**Travis:** And so it kind of gained a connotation that massage therapists want to distance themselves from, so now "massage therapist" is the preferred term to use for that profession.

**Teresa:** Correct! Um, so we're all the way up into the 1930s now, and the thing about the 30s was we started to get into kind of, like—instead of treating diseases, it's moving on to general health promotion and rehabbing injuries. So, we're starting to move away from massage as internal medicine, and more as massage as, like, wellness upkeep.

**Travis:** Gotcha.

**Teresa:** Um, and at this point in history, really even up to the 50s, you could find a massage therapist employed at public baths, beauty parlors, even some sort of, like—you know, like YMCAs or equivalent community rec centers, salons, things like that.

So it was—it was really prevalent, even though the, um... the first established association didn't really come about until 1943.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** Which, at the time, was called the American Association of Masseuses and Masseurs, but again, like you said, those words have different connotation at this point in time, so they are now called the American Massage Therapy Association.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** So, I mean, here's the thing. A lot like when, um, being a medical doctor got kind of, you know—like, the boards, right? You have to pass a board to be called a specific type of doctor.

This is the time in history where this really started being something that you looked for in a massage therapist. It wasn't—

**Travis:** Like, licensed, and—

**Teresa:** Like licensing, and accreditation, and things like that. And I think that that has really helped distinguish between the negative connotation of, quote, "massage parlor," and the positive wellness connotation of "massage therapy."

**Travis:** Got it.

**Teresa:** So, this is the point where those two actually completely diverge, and have close to what we have today.

**Travis:** I also think—I imagine that when you talk about licensing and structure and everything, it also probably guarantees some kind of continuity of treatment. Like, if you go to—if you move from Ohio to, you know, Washington State, and it's like, you go to a massage therapist there, and then a massage therapist there, you can expect a similar experience, even if it's a different therapist. You know? Rather than just, like, "Well, this is the way *I* do it."

**Teresa:** Exactly.

**Travis:** Okay. Well, let's talk some more and answer some questions. But first, how about a thank you note for our sponsors?

[theme music plays]

**Travis:** Teresa, can I tell you something very exciting I have not revealed to you before this moment? I was downtown in Cincinnati, drivin' around, goin' to hang out with some friends, and you know what I saw? A Warby Parker store.

**Teresa:** [gasps] What?!

**Travis:** I know! I was—

**Teresa:** There's an actual *store*?!

**Travis:** Yes! It's, I'm sure, a popup. I don't know how long it's gonna be there, but I saw it and I instantly was like—knowing my son, Cincinnati, had grown up.

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** My Soncinatti had grown up and was doing quite well for himself, because here's the thing: I love Warby Parker, and there's a ton of reasons. One, stylish-looking glasses. Two, affordable. Before I found out about Warby Parker, I never owned prescription sunglasses before, and now I have two pairs 'cause I am constantly afraid—basically, I got two pairs when we first went on the JoCo Cruise, 'cause I was *sure* Bebe was gonna throw them overboard.

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** I don't know why she would do that, but she's kind of a bully. Um, but yeah, so Warby Parker glasses start at \$95, and that includes prescription lenses with anti-glare and anti-scratching coating. And this is my favorite part. I have a large head, so glasses do not necessarily fit—

**Teresa:** Yes, we've heard these stories. The—[whispers] the big head incident.

**Travis:** Yes. The McElroys have the big heads.

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** And so, what you can do with Warby Parker is you can get five pairs to try on at home. So you go through the website, you say "I like this one, this one, this one, this one, and this one." They send it to you. You try them on and you're

like, "Hmm, this one's a little uncomfortable, uh... ah, this one's perfect!" And then you send back those try-on pairs, and then they send you the pair that you like. Like, the try-on process? Completely free. It's amazing. It even comes with a prepaid return shipping label, so there's no obligation to buy. You can return all five pairs and say, "No thank you. None of those." And, for every pair you buy, a pair is distributed to someone in need. It's incredible.

So go to [warbyparker.com/shmanners](http://warbyparker.com/shmanners) to order your free try-ons today. And after you head to [warbyparker.com/shmanners](http://warbyparker.com/shmanners) and place your home try-on order, make sure to download the Warby Parker app from the iTunes app store. I have it, and sometimes I just, like, look through it and dream.

**Teresa:** [laughs] *Shmanners* is also sponsored in part this week by Quip! Um, Quip is a really awesome company doing great things for teeth. They want you to start your healthy routines, and stick to them! Here's the things: the electric toothbrush that Quip will give you is the slimmest, most easily portable electric toothbrush I've seen, and it—

**Travis:** It's the size—it's like the size of a regular toothbrush, yes.

**Teresa:** [simultaneously] Of a regular toothbrush! And, I love how it has a built in timer, and it pulses every 30 seconds so you can even parcel out when to switch in your mouth. You don't end up with just, like, one side bein' brushed for two minutes.

**Travis:** And, what I also like—and man, this is gonna sound so nerdy—but the pulsing? The vibration? Isn't, like, bone-rattling, you know what I mean?

**Teresa:** Right.

**Travis:** I've used some electric toothbrushes before where it's like a jackhammer. And this is, like, as much as you need, no more; and it doesn't feel like a challenge you're doing to yourself. I enjoy brushing my teeth now. There! I said it!

**Teresa:** I also enjoy their toothpaste.

**Travis:** Yes. I love it.

**Teresa:** It is not aggressively minty. It doesn't require rinsing. Um, so you can keep tastin' it if you like it.

**Travis:** I think what people are gonna gather from this ad is, Teresa and I? We like moderation. Right down—

**Teresa:** We do!

**Travis:** —little minty, not too minty. Little vibration, not too much vibration.

**Teresa:** [simultaneously] Not too much vibration.

**Travis:** It's perfect! If you're moderate, like us—

**Teresa:** [laughs] And with Quip, you can get brush heads automatically delivered on a dentist-recommended schedule of every three months, for just \$5! Um, I don't know about you, but before we tried Quip, I probably did not change my toothbrush every three months.

**Travis:** No...

**Teresa:** Yeah...

**Travis:** No, because no one ever—I don't know how long three months is, you know what I mean? Like, three months have passed and I'm like, "I think it's been two weeks."

**Teresa:** Maybe, like, six months, 'cause I would go to the dentist and get a new toothbrush, and that would be exciting. But—

**Travis:** It's always exciting to go the dentist.

**Teresa:** [wheeze-laughs] But you can get yours delivered, and Quip starts at just \$25. If you go to [getquip.com/shmanners](https://getquip.com/shmanners) right now, you can get that first refill pack for free! So that's your first refill pack free at G-E-T-Q-U-I-P.com/shmanners!

[rock music plays]

**Speaker One:** *Dead Pilot's Society* brings you exclusive readings of comedy pilots that were never made, featuring actors like Patton Oswald.

**Patton Oswald:** So, the vampire from the future sleeps in the dude's studio during the day, and they hunt monsters at night. It's *Blade* meets *The Odd Couple*!

[audience laughs]

**Speaker One:** Adam Scott and Jane Levi.

**Jane Levi:** Come on, Cory! She's too serious, too business-y. She doesn't know the hokey-pokey.

**Adam Scott:** She'll learn what it's all about.

[audience laughs]

**Speaker One:** Busy Phillips and Dave Koechner.

**Dave Koechner:** Baby this is family.

**Busy Phillips:** My uncle Tell who showed his wiener to Cinderella at Disneyland is family. Do you want him stayin' with us?

**Dave Koechner:** He did stay with us, for three months!

**Busy Phillips:** [loudly] And he was a delight!

[audience laughs]

**Speaker One:** A new pilot every month, only on *Dead Pilot's Society*, from Maximum Fun.

[music plays]

**Jesse:** Hey, it's Jesse, the host of *Bullseye with Jesse Thorne*. I'm comin' to Portland, Oregon. We're going to be doing a very special live episode of *Bullseye*, my NPR interview show. It's taking place Friday, February 15<sup>th</sup>, at Revolution Hall.

What are you gonna see if you go to Portland, Oregon to see this show? You will see me, live onstage, talking with folks like Corin Tucker from Sleater-Kinney, director Lance Bangs, writer Bill Oakley, *Simpsons* Legend.



We will also have live music from Roseblood, and live comedy from Katie Wen. It's gonna be a blast and a half. It's also part of a big podcast festival called Listen Up Portland. Tons of other great podcasts are playing at it too, our pals the Doughboys among others.

So, again, that's Friday, February 15<sup>th</sup> at Revolution Hall in Portland, Oregon, 7 PM. Tickets are on sale now. Get them at [listenupportland.com](http://listenupportland.com). And thanks!

[music plays]

**Travis:** Okay. This first question comes from Jennifer.

"How do you convey politely that you don't want to chat during your massage? I can't imagine why anyone would want to make small talk, but a lot of therapists seem to think I do."

**Teresa:** Well... so, I read several accounts that had actual physical therapist quote in them, and someone—one of them said that most massages do start out with a little bit of small talk, but a—you know, a good massage therapist can tell when you wanna kind of close that off.

If you find that they're not taking the hint, I think it's perfectly acceptable to say, "Do you mind if I just rest for a while?"

**Travis:** Yep. Perfect. That's also great, because that is an "I" statement, "Do you mind if I rest?" Instead of, "Would you mind not talking?"

**Teresa:** Exactly.

**Travis:** Because then that makes that about them instead of about you. I would also say that a lot of times when you are about to start the experience they'll say, like, "What are you looking for? Are there any problem areas?"

I think that you could say something like, "I am just looking for a quiet, relaxing experience."

**Teresa:** Sounds great.

**Travis:** This is from Lev.

"If I don't like the lotion provided by the massage establishment, is it rude or too high maintenance to ask if I can bring my own? I have incredibly sensitive skin, and sometimes the lotion they use makes me itchy as heck."

**Teresa:** I do not think that this is a, uh—too much of a request, especially if, you know, you really do need those products for your sensitive skin.

I would suggest that you bring it in its original packaging, not, like, in whatever bottle you have it in at home. It should have its original packaging to make sure that—I don't know, maybe the massage therapist has an allergy or something.

**Travis:** Yeah. And also, sometimes, like, they won't—and I think this is perfectly fine—they wouldn't wanna use products that they can't guarantee are safe to use, you know?

**Teresa:** Exactly. Exactly. For the massage therapist's health as well. So, like, bring it in its original bottle, so that the ingredients can be listed and seen. Um, and, you know, always be super polite and nice about it. Explain your situation. Say, "I have very sensitive skin. I was hoping to get a massage today. I brought this lotion for my therapist to use."

**Travis:** I would make one small addendum.

**Teresa:** Okay.

**Travis:** Which is, if possible, schedule the appointment ahead of time and call ahead.

**Teresa:** Okay.

**Travis:** And say—because one—

**Teresa:** I think that's a good idea.

**Travis:** —it's always better to call ahead and make sure that that's something that they'll even allow, because if you get there and they say "We won't use outside products," then you're there and you've wasted a trip. So, one, it saves you that; two, it lets them prepare; and three, it just makes it a little less awkward for you when you get there. See—okay, so—

**Teresa:** Right, 'cause it's a known situation, now.

**Travis:** Right.

**Teresa:** Perfect.

**Travis:** This is a thing—just kind of in general—the first time I went to get a massage, I psyched myself out in several different ways, in such that I think whatever level of relaxation I would have gained from the massage was completely negated by all the things I worried about that I didn't need to. You know what I mean?

**Teresa:** Right.

**Travis:** So anything you can do to help yourself relax into the experience, you can do. So, like, a little bit of planning ahead of time, calling ahead if you have special requests, that kind of thing. And we'll touch on that more and more as we go.

Speaking of, this is one that was probably the most-asked question. This is from Ashton.

"How nude is appropriate when you're asked to undress? Any unspoken expectation or rules?"

**Teresa:** Um, everything that I have experienced and that I read was, "Disrobe to your comfort level."

For example, if you are not comfortable with having your upper glutes massaged, the—the buttocks area, having full coverage underwear on sends that signal.

**Travis:** I always keep on me undies. There it is! I'm not afraid to admit it! That is my comfort level!

**Teresa:** [laughs] That's your comfort level!

**Travis:** If there was a fire, I could run right out of there, not have to worry about it.

**Teresa:** And—

**Travis:** I'd be cold, but...

**Teresa:** [laughs] And you'll be draped the entire time, and when somebody says that, you have to take them at their face value. If you would like to get completely nude for your massage, go for it! No one's gonna—there's no embarrassment, because this is their job.

**Travis:** Right.

**Teresa:** They do this all the time.

**Travis:** This is one of the most important things to remember, 'cause another thing that I really psyched myself out is—I often get blemishes on my back, and that was the thing I would, like, worry about.

But then I remembered, like, this person has been doing this as a job forever. Like, and this is an experience I'm paying for, so as long as it's not... I'm—you know, infectious disease oozing out of my back or whatever, then, like, it's probably gonna be okay, you know?

**Teresa:** Right.

**Travis:** And so that's the thing is once again, your experience matters, too. And this is your experience, you know what I mean? So do what makes you comfortable, as long as it's within the bounds of proper for the experience.

**Teresa:** And in that line, also, if you do have an injury that you would prefer not to have touched, make sure you tell the therapist beforehand. Um, and that is something that is grounds for refusal of a massage if the therapist is uncomfortable with your level of injury.

**Travis:** Um, and that is—let me also just say this. If at any point in your experience you are uncomfortable, be it discomfort from the massage or from some action the therapist is taking, say something. Right?

**Teresa:** Absolutely.

**Travis:** Because the first time I got a massage, they asked what level of pressure and I was like, "I'm pretty tough! A 10!" And it was so uncomfortable, and every time I was *just* about to say something, they moved to, like, a different point. You know what I mean?

And I wish, looking back, I could've said something, but I've never been in the position where the massage therapist has touched me in a way that made me uncomfortable, but if that happens to you, stop it right there, because that's not okay.

And along those same lines, we've been talking a lot in terms of, like, professional massage therapy. We should also say, in general, person-to-person, don't just give a massage to someone without asking.

**Teresa:** Yeah. Consent is key.

**Travis:** And two, if someone starts giving *you* a massage without asking, feel free to say, "You know what? I'm not comfortable with you touching me without asking first, because *that's* not relaxing."

Okay. Um, speaking of, this is from Mara.

"How do you deal with social anxiety and not wanting to be touched, but you could really use a massage for pain relief?"

**Teresa:** Um, I think that there... there are probably things that a therapist can do for you. Hot stones are sometimes used in different salons or whatever, spas. Hot towels can also be used. And then, I mentioned the drape, which is just basically a sheet that's put over you.

I have even had sometimes massage on top of the drape instead of underneath it. I think that's a perfectly reasonable request. That way there's a layer at least between the touching of skin.

**Travis:** You may also wanna, like, ease in to the experience by maybe starting with, like, hand and arm massage; or, like, just shoulders, you know? Something where you're not getting undressed and they're not—you don't feel exposed, and maybe it's just a briefer, like, 15 minute thing.

You often see those, like, express spas in—

**Teresa:** They're like little kiosks!

**Travis:** —right. In, like, airports and stuff. Like, maybe start with something like that and build up a tolerance to, like, "Okay, I can disassociate myself enough to think about this as an experience rather than the discomfort of being touched."

**Teresa:** And, if there—if you truly cannot make yourself be touched, there are massage machines. I know Travis got me a really nice one for when I was pregnant.

My lower back was *quite* tight, but I could not—I couldn't fathom getting a massage every week at that point in my life, so I—he got me a massager that you kind of strap around your back, and that doesn't have any physical touch, as far as, you know, human-to-human goes.

**Travis:** And there's always the chairs at Brookstone. So—

**Teresa:** Yeah!

**Travis:** —um, let's see. This is from Josie.

"I've never gotten a massage before. How does one go about finding a good place to go?"

**Teresa:** I would always suggest recommendations from your friends.

**Travis:** Yeah. Word of mouth is—

**Teresa:** Word of mouth is the best. I mean, there's always, like, Groupon deals and stuff.

**Travis:** Or, I mean, Yelp. 'Cause I—one of the things I really like about Yelp is being able to look at interior photos, you know?

**Teresa:** Mm-hmm.

**Travis:** 'Cause I would feel weird driving down, walking in the door, looking around, and going "Nope!" [through laughter] and walking back out.

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** But you can look at the Yelp photos and say, like, "Okay, this looks nice." But yeah, I do think word of mouth, or even, like, reviews on the place if we're talking about Yelp. Um, yeah. Something like that.

There's also chains, I think? Like Massage Envy is a chain?

**Teresa:** I believe so.

**Travis:** Um, and so you might not get as special an experience as, like, a really unique spa, but you get more of a unified, like, uh...

**Teresa:** Yeah. If you go to one in a different part of town or a different city, you'll pretty much get the same experience.

**Travis:** Right. This is question is from Olivia.

"Do I tip a massage therapist? How much?"

**Teresa:** Um, it varies by spa. Some spas or therapy centers do not allow tipping, but most of the time, the standard 15 to 20 restaurant tip goes for them too.

**Travis:** I would just ask—like, when you're signing in with the front desk or whatever, I would say, like, "And is tip included in the price?" Right?

**Teresa:** Perfect.

**Travis:** So then you know ahead of time. And they might say, like, "Oh, we don't accept tips." Or, like, "It is not." And then you know, right?

**Teresa:** And I would also suggest, um... when you—I mean, we talked about earlier calling ahead and making an appointment. You can ask then as well, so you'll know if you need to give cash tips, or if they can be added to whatever card you may use.

**Travis:** Um, this question is from Saws.

"As a person who's perceived as female—I'm not—I feel like I can't go for a full body massage without grossing the massage therapist out with my leg hair, etc.

Should I cave and shave, stop giving a fluff about opinions on my fluff, or simply never get that massage?"

That last option's out.

**Teresa:** Out!

**Travis:** You're gonna get yourself a massage.

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** Here's the thing: *I* have leg hair. I have armpit hair. I have, God knows, chest hair. And back hair, and shoulder hair, and neck hair. I'm old. And, like... so? Like, the thing is is I think that to worry about grossing out a massage therapist whose job it is to, like, give massages to people—like, I think you're worried—this is the thing that we come up on this show a lot, which is, in an effort to not bother someone else, you're bothering yourself way more than that thing would actually bother someone else.

**Teresa:** Exactly. You're compromising your experience from your own fear of what others perceive. So, like, I would say, go as you are!

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Teresa:** You know? And the massage therapist certainly has seen someone more hairy than you.

**Travis:** Probably me!

**Teresa:** Probably Travis!

**Travis:** It was probably me!

**Teresa:** It was probably Travis. Um, and unless you have, like I said, maybe an infection or some sort of skin opening injury, I'm—I'm pretty sure that they won't even notice. [laughs]

**Travis:** Yeah. 'Cause I have to think—I have never been a massage therapist. But you have to think at a certain point, like, you're doing your job but you're



thinking about, like, grocery shopping you have to do. Isn't that everyone does their job?

**Teresa:** I—I think so.

**Travis:** Right? Okay. One last question. This is from Kelsie.

"There is sometimes an option to request a male or female massage therapist, and I find that awkward to even answer the question, even when the answer to the question is 'doesn't matter to me.'"

**Teresa:** So, this is something I also have encountered, and in my experience, I'm more worried about the massage therapist's feeling than I am about mine, like we said. And sometimes I'll just ask for a female because I feel like *they* will be more comfortable with *me*. But in reality, it doesn't really matter to me, either.

**Travis:** Yeah. This is another thing where the first couple times that I went I was worried that whatever answer I gave... would *reveal* something about me to the—that I didn't want—or—I don't know.

**Teresa:** Mm-hmm.

**Travis:** It was—that was... bullcorn. Um, 'cause the thing is is once again, there have been 50 other people than have come in that day, and 50 other people that'll come in that day after you.

And, like, that person at the front desk isn't gonna remember you, doesn't care what you answer—like, that—I don't think the answer reflects on you at all so much as, like, it's yours to answer. If you have a preference, it's there to make you more comfortable, and if you don't have a preference, you could say it doesn't matter. And it's—really, it's about—

**Teresa:** I would liken it to when you go to a restaurant and you have the choice of table or booth!

**Travis:** Yes. Yes! Exactly.

**Teresa:** That's exactly what it is. It's if you want either one, you can be seated at the one you prefer. Or, I will choose for you and seat you where it's most convenient for me.

**Travis:** But—like, that's the thing. Answer what makes you comfortable, 'cause it's your experience to have, you know what I mean?

Okay, that's gonna do it for us. Thank you so much for joining us. Uh, let's see. A couple housekeeping things real quick.

There's the *Shmanners* "Hello, my dove" "Hello, my dear" t-shirt, designed by Kate Leth, that you can find at [mcelroymerch.com](http://mcelroymerch.com).

**Teresa:** You can also find pins, too!

**Travis:** Yes.

**Teresa:** Those are nice.

**Travis:** Of the same design. They're so cute. Um, and while you're there, check out all the other stuff on [mcelroymerch](http://mcelroymerch.com). It's all great!

Um, the McElroys are going to PodCon this weekend, like I said. You can go to [podcon.com](http://podcon.com) to find out information about that. Um... what else? Oh! We're going on tour, uh... I believe it's February 7<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, and 10<sup>th</sup>.

**Teresa:** But you'll be able to find that information out at [mcelroy.family](http://mcelroy.family).

**Travis:** Correct. Um, we're going to be in Birmingham on the 7<sup>th</sup>, and then we're in New Orleans on the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>. If you want to get tickets for that, like she said, [mcelroy.family](http://mcelroy.family). And it's gonna be *My Brother, My Brother, and Me* and *The Adventure Zone* and some combination of *Shmanners* and *Sawbones* opening for those, so check that out.

Um, what else, Teresa?

**Teresa:** Well, we want to do our thank yous. So, thank you to Brent "brentalfloss" Black for writing our theme music, which is available as a ringtone where those are found.

Thank you to Kayla M. Wasil for our Twitter thumbnail art, you can mess—you can tweet at us @shmannerscast.

Thank you to Keely Weis Photography for her photo that we use as the... ban—  
cover banner? Is that it?

**Travis:** Sure.

**Teresa:** I don't know. [through laughter] The cover picture for the fan-run  
Facebook group, which you should join, called Shmanners Fanners!

**Travis:** And that's gonna do it for us, so join us again next weekend!

**Teresa:** No RSVP required.

**Travis:** Why did I say "weekend?" Anyways—

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

**Travis:** —you've been listening to *Shmanners*!

**Teresa:** [holding back laughter] Manners, *Shmanners*. Get it?

[theme music plays]

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