

Shmanners 192: Ask Shmanners

Published January 10th, 2020

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[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: Oh my gosh. [laughing]

Travis: So pregnant!

Teresa: Sooo pregnant! Here's the thing...

Travis: Uh-huh?

Teresa: Right.

Travis: Right.

Teresa: Uh, for the first pregnancy, we only made it like, 36 weeks. And I was enormous. It's true.

Travis: Yeah. You were carrying a lot of water for some reason.

Teresa: I was carrying a lot of water. There is... [sighs] I can't remember exactly. We did—that year, we did Candenights early.

Travis: In September, because we were filming the TV show.

Teresa: In September. Right. Even though Candenights can be any time of the year.

Travis: Anytime. Yes.

Teresa: And... I remember, in the article talking about the Candenights show in the Huntington Dispatch...

Travis: Uh-huh. Herald Dispatch, but yes.

Teresa: Herald Dispatch, sorry.

Travis: Lot of hometown pride. Go on.

Teresa: [laughs] Saying something about me being enormously pregnant, or... was it enormous?

Travis: I don't think the newspaper said that.

Teresa: No, it did. There was some sort of qualifier.

Travis: Hey, if any journalists are listening... that's not good Shmanners. [laughs]

Teresa: And being... I was huge. It's true. I am not that huge this time.

Travis: No.

Teresa: Because I'm not carrying the amount of water that I had the last time.

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: But I have—I have jumped that hurdle of the 36 weeks, and I am try—I'm trying so hard to enjoy these last few days. Um, but I just want it out. Want it out. Can you get it out?

Travis: So here's the thing, folks. As you're listening to this, uh, one way or t'other, there's gonna be a new McElroy baby come Tuesday. Um, and so, this is going to be our last new episode for a couple weeks.

Teresa: Get it—I want it out. Get it out.

Travis: Okay. No, I—yes. I understand that.

Teresa: Pregnancy actually lasts ten months if you think about how there are an average of four weeks in a month. That's 40 weeks, so that's ten months.

Travis: Okay. So... [laughs]

Teresa: [sighs]

Travis: We're gonna be havin' this baby real soon. Um, and so, we wanted to get another fresh episode out before we started doing some re-airst of some Shmammers classic. Um, also, happy New Year everybody! Happy, uh, holidays in general. Now, we're on that slog 'til Valentine's Day.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Wait, when's Groundhog's Day? Is that later? Anyways.

Teresa: Anyways. I think that's in April.

Travis: Nooo.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: Is it?

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: Okay. You seem so confident. I'll go along with you.

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: Um, so, we wanted to do an Ask Shmanners to get some questions out there so we can cover a buuunch of topics.

Teresa: Your burning, burning questions.

Travis: Burning, burning questions.

Teresa: Burning a hole in your pocket? What is that—

Travis: Keep your questions in your pocket where they belong!

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Okay. This is from, uh, Allie, or Ali. One of those two. "My office is business casual. I'm a queer person with breasts who dresses masculine. If I am wearing men's clothing, do the same rules for men apply to me? Specifically, regarding tucking shirts. I prefer my shirt untucked, because it gives a more masculine look to my body, but is it appropriate?"

Well, I can answer right off the bat here.

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: There—if you are looking to do this, choose clothing – choose shirts specifically that are designed to be untucked.

Teresa: Yes. Ding ding ding. I agree.

Travis: Yes. Nailed it. Got it in one.

Teresa: Unless there is a specific rule within your office culture, according to, y'know...

Travis: They said it's business casual. Something like that is...

Teresa: Yeah. There isn't. Right? According to HR, that you must follow, should you wear a button down said, that said shirt must be tucked in. I think that, if you find those shirts that are meant to be untucked, and there are lots of really stylish, like, button up, untuckable shirts.

Travis: I will say, I never tuck my shirts in. I also do not like the look of it. So, what you want to specifically—

Teresa: I think the only time I've seen you with a shirt tucked in is if you have a vest on top.

Travis: Yeah. Or like, I mean, if it's a suit. If it's a suit, I'll tuck it in. But if I—

Teresa: But if it's business casual, you never tuck it in.

Travis: Um, what you are specifically trying to avoid is, if you're looking at a button up shirt, and it has, uh... it's longer in the front and back than it is on the sides, right? It looks like it has kind of tails on the front, y'know what I mean? Like, where—

Teresa: And there's sometimes like, curved, even.

Travis: Right. A nice, straight across the bottom shirt, uh, is designed to be worn untucked.

Teresa: And it should hit just below the belt.

Travis: Yes. If it's too long, right, that's when it starts to look weird. Uh, but listen – there are plenty, plenty of cool business casual looks you can do with an untucked shirt.

Teresa: And I think maybe an unbuttoned vest on top of that would look really cute.

Travis: Or a jacket. I mean, I get away with that a lot.

Teresa: Or a jacket.

Travis: I have a lot of cool non-blazer, non... like, coat jackets.

Teresa: Mm-hmm. That's somewhere in between.

Travis: Right. That are really stylish and look good with the shirt untucked. Right? Um, in general, if you are wearing a jacket over it, try to get a jacket and a shirt that are about the same length. You don't want, uh, the button up shirt to be much longer than the jacket. Unless it looks good together, y'know what I mean?

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Here's the thing – if it looks good, do it.

Teresa: Fashion.

Travis: Uh, this is from Jai. "How do I quit a job where I'm miserable, but my boss seems to rely on me completely?"

Teresa: Oh man. I have been in this boat.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: And really, the only thing you can do is give appropriate notice.

Travis: Or, even extra—extra appropriate notice, y'know?

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: If everyone does two weeks, but you know you're like...

Teresa: Indispensable.

Travis: Right. Then you could—like, I've done this before where I've said to my boss, like, I am putting in my notice, but I will help you find someone to replace me before I leave, and I will train them before I leave.

Teresa: Yes. I think that's good. I think when we—

Bebe: A hot dog!

Teresa: [laughs] ... moved to California...

Travis: Bebe is watching an episode with uh, characters dressing in different costumes in the background, so if you hear her shouting out random words, that's what's going on.

Teresa: Yeah. When we moved to California, this was the case for my job. And so, months ahead of time, I talked to my boss. I said, "Look, this is something my husband and I are discussing. I want you to know. The first one to know, this is something that we don't have a timeline for yet. But I—I understand how important I am to the machine around here, so let's figure out how we can divide my duties, or replace me, or y'know, figure something out."

It's the notice, I think, that people really start to feel like, "Oh, it's crunch time, and you're abandoning me."

Travis: But do get—here's two top tips. One, if you give that kind of notice, give—even if it's an extra-long time, a definite time.

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: I am leaving in two months. I will help you find—not like, “Once we find somebody...” Because then your boss might put that off, ‘cause they don’t want to lose you.

Teresa: Yeah. There’s no impetus to get to the grindstone and find somebody.

Travis: But the other thing I will say is, if you are leaving the job solely because you are miserable at it, I would say to do some kind of soul searching and say, is there something that could change that would make me like this job more? A raise, better hours, whatever.

Teresa: Dividing your duties, maybe.

Travis: Right. And if that’s the case, I would say—I would present that to your boss and say, y’know, “I know how important I am here, and here are some things I haven’t been happy with it.” Or, at the very least, know those things so that when you go to your boss and say, “I am putting in my notice,” if your boss says, “Is there anything I can do to make you stay?” You can say, “Well, this and this and this.”

Teresa: Right.

Travis: This is from Vicky. “How do I ask my friends for money they owe me? Like when I go out to eat and I pick up the tab, and my friends say they’ll pay me back.”

Teresa: Um... I have—I have two answers for this. The first one is... ask, but don’t blindsides someone. So like, when you are out the next time is not the time to ask for the money that’s owed.

Travis: No. And along those same lines, I would say, ask sooner rather than later.

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: 'Cause if you're going to ask—like, the next day. Not, like, a month later. Because the month later sends a signal of, “This has been eating me alive for the last month.”

Teresa: [laughs] Exactly. But, if you shoot someone a text the next day, “Hey, I know we’re going out to the bar later. Can you bring that ten bucks you owe me?”

Travis: Right.

Teresa: That gives them plenty of time, um, and no one has that, “Oh, will we... do I... should I... oh, I didn’t bring it...” That kind of thing. And then, the other thing I would suggest is, get everybody on like, a Venmo together.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: So that you can use the app...

Bebe: I don’t want this one.

Travis: Excuse me while we pause for a minute so I can change the episode of Umizoomi that Bebe is watching. And we’re back. Umizoomi crisis averted.

Teresa: [laughs] She’s very particular. She doesn’t really like tension in her cartoons. Anyway.

Travis: Yes. Why would you?

Teresa: Anyway, get everybody on like, a Venmo. Like, I don't know how it works exactly. A Venmo-like sheet together or something, so that the app does the asking for you. As long as you've already discussed that, “Hey, I'll cover it this time, but I do need you to pay me back,” the Venmo can take care of it.

Travis: See, that to me is the important part, too. Because there is a huge difference between, "I owe you one," and, "I will pay you back." Right? So, if someone says, "Oh, I forgot my wallet," right? Say like, "Oh, I can pick this up if you can pay me back when you get your wallet," or, "Pay me back, Venmo me later." Right? You need to establish the parameters there. Not like, "Okay, I've got it, and you owe me." Right? 'Cause that sounds like a fun friend thing of like, "You owe me one."

Teresa: Or like, "I'll take this one, and you get the next one," type deal.

Travis: I—I don't know if this is like, Emily Post, y'know, guidelines. But for me, um, if I only offer to pay for people that I spend a lot of time with or I do a lot of things with. 'Cause the way I see it is, it all evens out in the wash eventually.

Teresa: Yeah. I think that that's something... y'know, we always talk about, consider your relationship with these people.

Travis: Right. It's been a long time since I have said, "Oh, I've got it," and expected to be paid back.

Teresa: Right.

Travis: But, I remember a time where that was not the case, and like, if someone was broke and I—y'know, and wanted to still hang out, I would cover them and expect to be paid back. But like I said, it's all expectations. All conversations you need to have at the time. Because if someone thinks you're treating, and then you say, "Okay, so, the tab came to this, so you owe me \$20." That's... that can blindside someone and make for not so great a conversation.

Teresa: Agreed.

Travis: Uh, this is from Emily. "What's the best thing to do for new parents? Fun gifts? Practical gifts? Lots and lots of food? Offering to take the baby while they sleep? My sister is having a baby in March, and I want to help her out."

Teresa: Oh man. Gosh, all those things sound really great to me right now.

Travis: Yeah, but here's the thing – everybody's different.

Teresa: [laughs] That's true. With Bebe, my first baby, I did not want anyone to take her out of my sight.

Travis: Right. Yep.

Teresa: And while she was sleeping, I was sleeping. But this is going to be the second child, and if someone wants to take Bebe, they are totally welcome. [laughing] Probably also with Dot as well.

Travis: Yeah. So, I would say, the easy answer, the clear answer is, you need to ask them, and you need to ask them fairly insistently to get over the hurdle of politeness. "Hey, if there's anything I can do, let me know."

"Oh thanks, we're great."

"No, seriously. Let me know. I can do this and this and this."

Teresa: And I think that is the thing. You need to list what you are willing to do, and talk about how these are things you have thought of. Um, the making food for someone, I think, is a great idea. But it needs to be discussed. Do they like lasagna? Y'know, that kind of stuff.

Travis: Do they already have a fridge full of food? I mean, right now, like, knowing that this is coming, we have bought a lot of like, ready to bake frozen stuff, right?

Teresa: Right.

Travis: And so, that would—this, in general, is the thing that... My piece of advice is that, when you think of new parents, that's not just like, the day after the baby.

Teresa: Exactly.

Travis: That's often the most chaotic time, at which point, if you ask me what I need, the answer is, "I have no idea."

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: I... uh... But a month later? Right? Even two weeks later? That's probably the time at which they have seen where the opportunities for someone to help actually are.

Teresa: And don't forget that the gift of time is also a really great gift. If um, if you want to come over and like, just clean my kitchen? That would be ahh-mazing.

Travis: Or just come over and spend time with them so that they get to talk to an adult. That's also very helpful.

Um, this question is from AJ. "How can I politely ask/tell my coworkers that they cannot constantly flake on shutting down things they're on schedule to without saying anything? 'Cause it leaves—" Okay, so, the coworker is leaving without shutting things down without saying anything, and it leaves AJ in a position where they have to spend an extra ten to 45 minutes to shut everything down.

I think that the thing is – and this is something we come back to a lot – this person is not behaving politely to you. You are asking, if I'm reading between the lines, you're asking for a way to confront them about it, but without making it seem like it's a confrontation, 'cause you don't want to... the answer is, you have to say it directly.

Teresa: And here is a really great way to be diplomatic about it, even though it is their job and they should be doing it. It's important to set clear expectations. So, one of the things that I did in my former life as a supervisor is, I listed out, in order, opening and closing duties as they should be done. Right? So—and they were posted. They knew where they were. I

would say, "Okay, time to close up. Take a look at the duties, and let's make sure we get everything done before we go."

Because, if people don't understand what the expectation is, they can't meet it.

Travis: Yep.

Teresa: So, I clearly listed the expectations, and lo and behold, when people know what they're supposed to do to get out of there, they do it, and they do it fast.

Travis: Right. And I think, y'know, we talked before about using "I" statements, like, uh... "I have been spending a lot of extra time doing these closing duties, and I would appreciate it if you could share in them so that I—" Y'know, that kind of thing. But I think that the answer is the same as we give a lot of people, which is, not everybody is conscientious.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: And there are people who will, y'know, give a inch, take a mile kind of thing, where if you don't say anything, they won't do it, because they're the type of person who only does it if someone's gonna yell at them if they don't do it.

Teresa: Right. Um, and I would also encourage you that if you continue to end up spending this extra time, make sure it is on your clock. Get paid for that.

Travis: Oh yes.

Teresa: Because if the people who are supposed to help you are leaving early, that should also be reflected on their time card.

Travis: And listen, if this is—if you speak with the coworker, and it continues to be an issue after that, go to the next step up. To whoever your manager is, or boss, or HR, or whatever. Because I will say, back in my days

of working, like, scheduled, y'know, clock in, clock out times, having to stay one minute past the time when I was expecting to leave... I understand. That is... eugh. So yes, if it continues to be an issue, take it up the ladder.

Uh, let's see. This is from, uh, Niefer. Sorry if I mispronounced that. "How polite do I have to be to catcallers?" Catcallers. Eh, how do I make it sound like it's not collars for cats? Anyways. Catcallers.

Teresa: That was better.

Travis: Thank you. "My mom told me say 'thanks' and move away, but I'm not thankful for that BS, so I don't think I need to say it." You should not be thankful for that BS. Catcalling sucks.

Teresa: You can just ignore. Um, there are situations where I have been catcalled and felt unsafe, and looking the catcaller in the eye with my disapproving stare made me feel safer. Um, and so, like, I see you. I know what you're doing. We both know that this is not cool. But also, I think that you are well within your rights to just... leave it. Let it go, y'know?

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: You don't have to say thank you. Um, that is kind of like... the... [laughs] The ultimate, uh, example of politeness for politeness sake, I think.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: But yeah. I think that those are both great choices, and if you— you definitely don't have to say thank you.

Travis: No. Um, we're gonna take a quick break for a thank you note to our sponsors, and we'll be back with more of your questions.

[theme music plays]

Travis: Hi! Hi, friends. It's me, your husband host, Travis McElroy. This is a fun kind of time capsule thing where the episode you're hearing was

recorded two days before Dot was born, and now, what you're hearing now, me talking, was recorded three days after baby Dot was born. Huh! Recording technology. How funny.

Well, I wanted to take a second to tell you about some sponsors this week that we're so thankful for. Um, first, let me tell you about HoneyBook. Now, listen... if you're a small business owner, you got into your line of work because you feel passionate about it. You love it. But, tedious admin work is keeping you from doing the part of the job you actually love.

So, HoneyBook can take those tasks off your to-do list. You can focus on why you started your business in the first place. HoneyBook is an online business management tool that organizes your client communications, bookings, contracts, and invoices all in one place. It's perfect for freelancers, entrepreneurs, or small business owners that want to consolidate services they already use, like QuickBooks, Google Suite, Excel, and MailChimp.

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And I also want to tell you about Betabrand! Listen, getting ready for work and deciding if today is a stylish day or comfortable day, that can be stressful. Y'know? 'Cause sometimes you want to look fancified, and sometimes, you want to look, uh, comfortable. Or you want to feel comfortable.

Well, now you don't have to choose. Thanks to Betabrand's dress pant yoga pant, you don't have to choose. These are dress pants that are as comfortable as yoga pants. Wow. What a promise, and Betabrand delivers.

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from dozens of colors, patterns, cuts, styles, like boot cut, straight leg, skinny, cropped, and more. They even have a pair with eight pockets. Yes, I said eight pockets.

Right now, our listeners can get 20% off their first order when you go to Betabrand.com/Shmanners. That's 20% off your first order at Betabrand.com/Shmanners. Millions of people agree that these are the most comfortable pants you'll ever wear to work. Go to Betabrand.com/Shmanners for 20% off.

We also have a jumbotron this week! This message is from Ian, and it's for Madison, and Ian says, "Thank you so much, Madison, for introducing me to all of the shows that the McElroy brothers are involved in, including Shmanners. I just wanted to get on here and tell you I love you so very much. I can't wait to spend the rest of my life with you, my beautiful girl." That's so nice. Thank you. Everyone, that is lovely. If you see Ian today, say thank you, that's nice. Madison, you, I bet, are even better.

So, please enjoy the rest of the show. Uh, and we'll be back with some—a couple rebrand—or, excuse me, re-air episodes here in the next couple weeks. Okay! Back to the show!

[theme music plays]

Travis: Okay. This next question is from Paul. "I work retail, and I was wondering if you have any tips for dealing with wrong-headed or misguided customers."

Teresa: Ooh. I'm gonna pass this one to you. I've never worked retail.

Travis: Um, so, the short answer is to ask questions, rather than make statements. So if they are saying... for example, when I worked returns and exchanges, and people would get angry 'cause something didn't work, I, instead of saying, y'know, "It's supposed to do this and not that," say like, "What did you try? What was the issue with it? What problems were you having?" That kind of thing. Give them a chance to explain.

'Cause sometimes, especially if you're dealing with returns and exchanges, sometimes, they are incredibly frustrated at themselves or with the product, and you are the outlet for that, and that is not fair. I also think that one of the strongest weapons that you have in your disposal, and maybe it's more like a shield, but I use this phrase all the time, which is, "I understand. I understand that you are feeling blah blah blah blah because of this." Right?

Because I—when I worked LP at the front of the store, we would have... for example, it was always computers.

Teresa: LP?

Travis: Loss prevention. I was the person who stood at the front.

Teresa: Ah, yes. Yes yes yes. I just didn't—I wasn't hip to the lingo.

Travis: Oh! Sorry. [laughs]

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Um, but like, the computer, like, section was always jam-packed with people who had tons of questions, and there was like, two people working. So they would stand back there. The customers would stand back there for like, five minutes, get mad that no one was free, and go to leave. Right? And if I saw that, I could say, "Is there anything I can help you with?" And they were like, "I stood back there for ten minutes and nobody helped me!"

If you say, "I understand that that's incredibly frustrating. If you give me one minute, I can get somebody up here that will help you." And that usually diffuses the situation. 'Cause in pretty much all things, all anyone wants when they're angry or whatever, y'know, in a circumstance like that, is to be understood. Right? Because a lot of the times, when you're getting frustrated, a lot of it is kind of also embarrassment that you care so much about it. That you're so frustrated.

Teresa: Yeah. I feel that.

Travis: Right? That you're like, "It's silly that I'm this angry about not understanding how modems work," or whatever. And just having someone say, "I understand that that is frustrating." Right? Like, that's 90% of why I go to therapy. [laughs]

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: And so, I think that that's a good way to wind it down. Now, if it is beyond that, and it is like, this person is being belligerent, this person is being threat—then that is what higher ups are for. That's what managers are for. That is what bosses are for. Like, you do not have to be yelled at, no matter what they pay you. No one has ever been paid enough to be treated like garbage.

Teresa: I agree. And that is something that I am also—I am familiar with as a supervisor. Like I said, my other life. Especially if you... if it is hindering your job performance in that second, what you're doing while you listen to this person yell at you is, is letting... one, the other people in line know that that's okay, and two, you are encroa—they are encroaching on the other peoples in line. Right?

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: So, they are making them frustrated, upset, all of that kind of stuff. So, get your supervisor out. And I used to deal with this with the lifeguards. Like, you can't—you can't do your job of watching swimmers in a pool while someone is yelling at you. It's too distracting. Go and get somebody who can be there and like, move—

Travis: You need a cooler. You need a cooler to cool down the situation.

Teresa: Move them away. [laughs] That's right.

Travis: Um, this question is from Amber, and it's kind of along the same lines. "I work as a blackjack dealer in a bar, and was wondering if you had

advice on calming down drunk folks or getting them to lower their voice. Thanks a bunch." So, here's a secret.

Teresa: Ooh, secret time.

Travis: Just a little secret. If you want a drunk person to lower their voice, speak to them in the lowered voice, and they will, nine times out of ten, match it.

Teresa: This works for toddlers, too.

Travis: It does work for toddlers, too. Um, this is another one of those tricky situations where there's lots of like, tricks and advice and, y'know, calming down... sometimes, if the person is mildly drunk – I have been this way – they may not realize how much energy they are bringing to the situation. Especially in something like gambling, right? Where there's literal stakes.

Teresa: Emotions are running high.

Travis: Yeah, emotions are running high. Sometimes just sayin' like, "Hey, you're comin' in real hot," like, is enough to make them go, "Oh, I didn't realize," right? Or signaling someone to bring them a glass of water or a ginger ale or something. But, once again, if it's belligerent, if this is like, an issue, especially if there's other people at your table and it is ruining their experience and making them feel uncomfortable, that's where you get a pit boss. You get security. You get somebody to remove that person.

Teresa: Right. 'Cause the last thing that you want is the whole table to leave.

Travis: Right.

Teresa: Because of one person who is not—not doing a good job.

Travis: And that's the thing. If someone is drunk, they are inherently, um, y'know, off kilter. They're inherently—they're inebriated, right? They are not

at their best. So if you are operating from sobriety and expecting them to understand your logical explanations, they—that's not going to work, 'cause they're drunk. Right?

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: So if they're so drunk, they're not listening to you say like, "Hey, you're being awfully loud." Right? Or whatever... there is no amount of explaining or tricks or hints or whatever you can do. The best thing is to just remove them from the situation.

Uh, this is from Matt. "What is the polite way to decline a meeting you scheduled with a friend?"

Teresa: Ooh. Okay, so—

Travis: I think what Matt means here is cancelling. [laughs]

Teresa: Cancelling. Yes. I think that's what is meant by this. Because if you scheduled it, you already accepted it. Right?

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: Um, and I think that... again, you need to decide what, uh, what this relationship means to you with the amount of explanation that you have to do. Um, so, if... if I were to cancel, say, a coffee date with a friend of mine, uh, if they are a good friend, I say, "Hey. I really—I can't make it today. I've got way too much on my plate. Let's reschedule for another time."

Travis: Right.

Teresa: Right? If it's a business acquaintance, I might not go into such detail. I might say something more like, uh, "This appointment isn't going to work for me today. Let's reschedule." But I think that timing is the most important part about this.

Travis: Yes. As soon as you know you're not going to be able to make it, let them know. I will also say, sometimes, listen. We're big advocates of mental health on this show. And sometimes, the reason you can't make it to a meeting has nothing to do with how busy your schedule is.

Teresa: It's true.

Travis: And sometimes it's just like, I—I don't know that I could leave the house right now. I don't know—like, the idea of getting—

Teresa: It just isn't going to work.

Travis: Right. And like, I have lots of frie—well, I have lots of friends. Period.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: I have many friends that I would feel very comfortable saying to them, like, "I would love to hang out with you right now. I don't know that I have the mental capacity to like, get ready and leave the house, and I'm freaking out about this and this and this. Is there any way like, you could come over here, or we could do it tomorrow?" Right? Like, I think—

Teresa: Again, that's about the relationship. Right?

Travis: Yes, exactly.

Teresa: Because if you have that kind of relationship with someone, that's something that I think that, y'know, you guys can relate to and work out together.

Travis: I think, though, the oth—along those same lines... it is important to analyze your feelings, and try to determine, if you can, if you... and I'm trying to fi—I don't know the right order of words. But really don't want to go, or do you... not want to go through the process of going, but you would want to do the thing. Does that make sense?

Teresa: I think? I think so.

Travis: Right? 'Cause like, I especially remember this when I lived in LA, right? Like, the idea of getting ready, and then driving 45 minutes to somewhere, and then searching for parking for 20 minutes, was a daunting thing. But, then, I'd get to go see a movie with Tybee, or get to hang out with Gaby Dunn, or get to—y'know, get to hang out with my friends.

Teresa: Right.

Travis: And it's like, "Oh, y'know what? I don't want to do that first part. That sucks. But, I do want to do that second part, so I'm gonna push through it and still go."

Teresa: Okay, yeah. That—that makes sense. Yeah.

Travis: 'Cause it's hard for me to overcome the momentum of sitting on the couch sometimes.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: We've all been there.

Bebe: Don't like this one!

Travis: What's that, Bebe?

Bebe: I don't like this one on.

Travis: Okay. Excuse us one second. Bebe has just decided three quarters of the way through an episode, she doesn't like it anymore. Okay, we're watching a mermaid one now. I think we're all set.

Uh, this question is from Olivia. "How do you politely continue, or leave, a conversation with an elderly person who says, "I've known you since you were a baby," or something along those lines, because a lot of older people do this to me, and I feel awkward, 'cause I don't know how to respond."

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Uh, I very much understand this, Olivia, because, uh, I, y'know, grew up in a southern Baptist church, and grew up in, y'know, a town where like, everyone knew my family. And then I moved away. So now, I move back—or, whenever I visit, people like to do this of like, “I don't know if you remember me, but I knew you when you were a kid!”

And what I have found often works is saying something like... like, you could joke it, right? “I've known you since you were a baby.”

“Well, I've done a lot since then. Right now, I'm doing blah blah blah.” And just transition into talking about yourself as an adult.

Or, just engaging with them in an adult conversation. Be like, “Oh, yes, it's great to see you! How are you? What have you been doing? How's such and such?” If you remember other people in their family or friend group or whatever. Right? And just move—jump. Because a lot of the time, when people say, “I knew you when you were a baby,” or something like that...

Teresa: They're really fishing for things to say. They don't have much.

Travis: Right. They remember you, but they have no context for you, 'cause they only knew you when you were a little kid. Right? And—but that said, if you don't want to engage, you can say, “Oh, it's so great to see you again! Thank you so much. Have a great day.” And move. Right? Move on.

Teresa: Certainly. Yeah.

Travis: Right? “Oh, it's so great to see you! I hope you're doing great! Oh yes, oh, I'd love to see ya again later!” Whatever.

Teresa: Something like that, I'm sure. [laughing]

Travis: And then move away. Right? Like...

Teresa: Right. I mean, it's—I don't think that anyone who says, "I've known you since you were a baby," who has really seen you every single day, is expecting anything else. I mean, because it feels—it feels like such filler words, right? What they're really saying is, "It's nice to see you again."

Travis: Yes. Right? And that's the thing. A lot of the times, it's like, one step up from, "How was your weekend?" Right?

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Like, "It was great! How was yours?"
"Great!"

Teresa: Right.

Travis: That's it.

Teresa: That's it.

Travis: And I—the thing is, we are oftentimes... we talk about this on this show a lot, too. When it comes to conversations, we, a lot of the times, feel rude ending a conversation. But at some point, every conversation ends.

Teresa: [laughs] That's true. And maybe this person is just filling—filling time until that happens.

Travis: Right. And they feel rude ending the conversation. Right? Like, if you're having a small talk conversation, "I haven't seen you since you were a baby. How are you doing? Oh, what do you do for a job now? Oh, that's lovely. That must be fun."

Like, that's not a conversation that is expected to continue for a half an hour.

Teresa: Exactly.

Travis: Right? Both parties are just looking for an opportunity to say, like, “Well, it was a pleasure talking to you. Oh, so great seeing you again. Have a great day.” The end.

Teresa: The end.

Travis: Uh, and I think that’s gonna do it for us! So, thank you so much. Uh, thank you for your understanding and patience as we go into this paternity maternity leave.

Teresa: [laughs] And hey, if you have a favorite episode, you'd like to see come back to the top of your feed, please, let us know. You can tweet at us @ShmannersCast, or you can email us, Shmanners@gmail.com. And both of those ways are easily searchable. [laughs] So uh, please let us know if you'd like to see, y'know, somethin’ you haven’t seen for a while at the top of your feed.

Travis: And y'know, if you have friends who love binging podcasts, this is the perfect time, ‘cause we’re gonna be gone for a couple weeks. They’ll have plenty of time to catch up.

Teresa: Ooh, yeah.

Travis: So tell all your friends about Shmanners. Make sure, ‘cause it took us a while to realize we needed to make sure this was clear, so tell your friends. This is a non-judgmental show.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: It’s about the history and current, uh, examples of etiquette, but we do not judge.

Um, let’s see... go check out all the other amazing shows on MaximumFun.org. Um—oh! If you are in Cincinnati or the Cincinnati area, I have got a Cincinnati Underground Society show coming up here at the end of the month, on January 31st. If you don’t know, that’s a show where I

bring in some of my performer and funny friends from all around the country—

Teresa: But shh, it's a secret!

Travis: But shh, it's a secret society.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Um, and they come, and we do a fun secret society style chat show right here in Cincinnati. If you want to get tickets or find out more about it, you can go to bit.ly/CUSS12020. 'Cause it's one, so... 12020. It's the first show of 2020.

Teresa: Yes. That makes sense.

Travis: Okay. [Bit.ly/CUSS12020](http://bit.ly/CUSS12020). Also, go check out all the other new merch at McElroyMerch.com. We got a bunch of stuff up there. Some really fun Adventure Zone stuff. Uh, let's see...

Teresa: And there's a super cute charcuterie pin! Love it.

Travis: There is! The pin of the month says "I had charcuterie today," and it's like a blue ribbon. It's pretty great.

Teresa: It's really great.

Travis: Uh, and I think that's gonna do it for us.

Teresa: Well, we always say thank you to Brent "Brental Floss" Black for writing our theme music, which is available as a ringtone where those are found. Also, thank you to Keely—I'm sorry. Bruja Betty Pinup Photography for the cover picture of our fan run Facebook group. Go and join it. Shmammers Fanners. They love to give and get excellent advice.

Also thank you to Kayla M. Wasil for our Twitter thumbnail art. Once again, our Twitter is @ShmannersCast. You can tweet at me @TeresaMcElroy. Is that right?

Travis: Uh-huh. Yes. [laughs]

Teresa: [laughs] And you can tweet at Travis @TravisMcElroy.

Travis: That's right. Or go on iTunes and rate, review, and subscribe. And *that's* gonna do it for us. Join us again next time.

Teresa: No RSVP required.

Travis: You've been listening to Shmanners.

Teresa: Manners, Shmanners. Get it!

[theme music plays]

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