

## **Shmanners 136: Ask Shmanners (LIVE at the London Podcast Festival)**

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**Travis:** Hello! It's Travis McElroy, um, your husband host—and while Teresa, your wife host, is not with me, I'm sure she would say hello as well. What you are about to listen to is actually part two of the episode that we recorded live in London at the London Podcast Festival, so part one was all about gin. Uh, the history and the etiquette surrounding gin. Um, and this is the audience Q&A portion of the show.

Um, also should note, uh, the—the parts where the audience is talking—they are on microphone, but they're a little bit quiet. I've tried to go through and bump them up wherever I could, um, but—yeah. So you might notice that they are a little quieter than us.

So, I hope you enjoy, and I'll talk to you again at the break!

[theme music plays]

**Travis:** Okay! So, we are going to take some audience questions now. Um, so we're going to need a little bit of house lights. First of all, how's everybody doin'?

[audience cheers]

**Travis:** Hi! Oh, it's so good to see all your faces! Hi, up there! I think we have a mic—

**Teresa:** Look, it's a balcony!

**Travis:** —I think we have a mic up there too for you, somewhere.

**Teresa:** Somewhere.

**Travis:** But we're gonna have people—where?

**Staff:** Right there.

**Teresa:** Oh, that one.

**Travis:** I don't—is that it? Okay.

**Staff:** Yeah.

**Teresa:** Yeah, it's a hanging mic.

**Travis:** Oh, cool! Don't try—don't, like, try to swing on it, please.

[audience laughs]

**Travis:** That's the one—they told us we had to tell you.

**Teresa:** S—no—[sighs]

**Travis:** Apparently the last time they didn't—no, it's fine. Um, so, who has a question?

**Audience Member:** Woo!

**Teresa:** Oh, boy! Okay.

**Travis:** Oh, you do! Since you have one of the mics, go for it!

**Teresa:** The "Woo!"

**Travis:** I'm gonna take my jacket off. Is that okay?

[audience cheers loudly]

**Travis:** I—okay.

**Teresa:** Don't even.

[audience laughs]

**Teresa:** If you encourage him—

**Travis:** I won't leave.

**Teresa:** —you never know what'll happen.

**Travis:** I'll just cry. Go on!

[audience laughs]

**Audience Member:** Uh, do you want my name?

**Travis:** Yes.

**Teresa:** Yes, please.

**Ashton:** So, my name is Ashton. I'm American.

**Teresa:** [gasps]

**Ashton:** I live in the UK, so—

[scattered cheers and laughter]

**Ashton:** —um, my 18<sup>th</sup> birthday is today, so—

[audience cheers]

**Teresa:** Happy birthday!

**Ashton:** Um, I was wondering how I can brag to my American friends that I skipped our drinking age.

**Teresa:** [gasps] Ooh! How you can brag? Well, I—I think we're going to give you two options. Uh, the first one in *Shmanner*-ly style I'm going to model after Emily Post, and say maybe not brag, maybe just post a picture on Instagram with your beer.

[audience laughs]

**Teresa:** Uh—

**Travis:** Bragging.

[audience laughs]

**Teresa:** —I'm not—I don't think that the caption needs to say, "[mockingly] Ha ha, look at you guys! I can drink!"

**Travis:** Or maybe just, like, uh, "So glad I'm finally old enough to drink. Happy 18<sup>th</sup> to me!"

[audience laughs]

**Travis:** You could also, um... just send them empty cans and bottles?

**Teresa:** [laughs loudly]

[audience laughs]

**Travis:** With, like, a note that said, "I drank these 'cause I'm old enough here, when I'm—I'm here!"

[audience laughs]

**Teresa:** Don't—

**Ashton:** Not only that, actually my cousin, she does turn 21, and she's kind of mad at me because we turned... legal at the same—

**Travis:** You—no joke, earlier today, I thought about—'cause we were, um, in a, you know, drinking establishment with Bebe—which we do in America, too. 'Cause we're cool! Um, and I was thinking, "You know, maybe for Bebe's 18<sup>th</sup> birthday—"

**Teresa:** We're millennials. We take the baby to bars.

[audience laughs]

**Travis:** And I thought maybe for Bebe's 18<sup>th</sup> birthday we should take another trip to the UK, like, and celebrate her birthday here so she can drink, and then give her, like, one day of, like, "You can drink legally here!" And then fly her back and be like—

[audience laughs loudly]

**Teresa:** That is the worst idea!

**Travis:** I don't know. We'll see. You don't have to come!

[audience laughs]

**Teresa:** So you should do that.

**Travis:** Mm-hm, there you go. Who else has a question?

[scattered cheers]

**Travis:** Okay. You pick the next person.

**Teresa:** Um, let's go here on the end in the checkered shirt, yes. Mm-hm.

**Jenny:** Hello!

**Travis:** Hi!

**Teresa:** Hello! What's your name?

**Jenny:** My name is Jenny. My pronouns are they/them.

**Travis:** Uh-huh.

**Teresa:** Wonderful, thank you.

**Jenny:** My—I'm going to America for the first time in... 23 days?

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** Alright!

**Jenny:** [crosstalk] I'm going to, um—

**Travis:** You gotta try McDonald's.

[audience laughs]

**Jenny:** Um, that's the thing. I'm going to see my girlfriend. She did take me to In and Out. Um—

[audience laughs]

**Teresa:** In and Out! Oh, make sure you eat those fries warm, because when they get cold it's really gross.

**Jenny:** Um, so when she was here for my birthday—and we had this weird thing of she was completely weirded out by the fact that we aren't concerned about the fact that there are just like—these are the toilets, not the bathrooms.

What weird thing should I know while I'm going to America that is polite there, but is like, "Yeah, we don't care about the toilet here."

**Teresa:** Hmm...

**Travis:** Huh. Weird things in America...

[audience laughs]

**Travis:** I just can't think of any!

**Teresa:** Well, um... I have to say, one of the things that, uh, we get a lot of inquiries about is about tipping. Um, people in America aren't paid a living wage... like people here.

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Teresa:** Um, and so—so, as far as tipping goes, it is appreciated, and almost kind of expected that one would tip, uh, for pretty much everything.

**Travis:** The default is usually tip. And, like, it's amazing when you don't have to.

**Teresa:** Yeah.

**Travis:** Um, and here—[laughs] I was amazed that the, uh, bellperson who brought our bags up—I said, like, "Is it customary to tip you?" And he's like, "Don't."

[audience laughs]

**Travis:** I was like, "Cool!" And I just liked that moment of real honesty from him. Like, "That would be weird if you did."

[audience laughs]

**Teresa:** Um, so that's one thing. Uh, the bathroom, yes. Uh, bathroom is more of a generic term, not just the room... with the bath in it, but the whole, like, rigmarole there.

**Travis:** Also the, um... I'm going to say this word, because it's the appropriate word to use here—"queuing line," the queuing rules? Not nearly as strict in America. It's all up—ugh, it's terrible!

[audience laughs]

**Travis:** It's just like Wild West over there, everybody jumpin' in line—"Oh, you can cut in!" "Uhh—" It's the worst.

**Teresa:** Um, the other thing I would say is, uh, something we've encountered here is there is not always a—a host to seat you in a restaurant. It's a lot of, um, seat—sit yourself where—wherever there is a seat. Um, and that is very uncommon in—in the US. Uh, because most of the time—there's just the control factor. People want you to sit where they want you to sit.

**Travis:** There's a reason. The reason it's more of a thing in America than it is here is because of tips.

**Teresa:** In the US.

**Travis:** Sorry, in the US—is because of tips, right? Because you want to make sure that everybody is evenly—gets even tables, 'cause if one person works ten tables and one person works two, this person gets ten tables worth of tips, and this person only gets two tables worth of tips.

So you have a host who evenly disperses everyone to different tables, so everyone gets the same amount of tips, whereas here, where tipping is not a

problem, sit wherever you want. And I imagine the people with two tables are like, "Yes!"

**Teresa:** [laughs loudly]

[audience laughs]

**Travis:** Um, also—and this is a secret, and I shouldn't even be telling you—never hold your hands like *this*, or you'll be arrested.

[audience laughs]

**Travis:** Always keep your hands palm down. There's nothing ruder in the US than have—I—I can't stress—and you know what? You'll ask people about and they'll say, "No, it's not a thing!"

[audience laughs]

**Teresa:** This makes me very uncomfortable.

**Travis:** We shouldn't even talk about it, you're right, Teresa.

[audience laughs]

**Travis:** I'm sorry I gave the secret away. Please don't tell anyone I told you... but for real.

[audience laughs]

**Travis:** Okay! Another question.

**Teresa:** Your turn.

**Travis:** Okay. Um... I am going to say, yes, white shirt and glasses, yes!

**Bees:** Hello!

**Travis:** Hi!



**Bees:** Okay. So—thank you. Um, as a millennial, I get—oh, my name is Bees, by the way.

**Teresa:** Hello.

**Travis:** Hi.

**Bees:** Um, as a millennial, I get a lot of people coming up to me and asking me why I'm on my phone a lot? And the weirdest time this happens is when it's strangers. And the last time this happened to me, I didn't handle it very well.

A stranger came up to me while I was waiting for some food in a takeaway and he said, "What would your mother think if she saw you attached to your phone like that?" When I was just texting a friend.

And I panicked, and replied, "My mum is dead."

[audience laughs and cheers loudly]

**Travis:** Yayyy! I actually think that's the best response! And what do you need from us?

**Bees:** What do you think would be a better way [crosstalk]—

[audience laughs]

**Travis:** Here's what you do. The next time that happens... you stop that person for a lengthy, two-hour lecture.

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** Because the fact of the matter is—I—I actually was just talking about this the other day—is that with the advent of smartphones, it's allowed people a lot more freedom to go out into the world without being afraid of not knowing things. So, like, I—I—we are of a generation that kind of bridges the gap from, like, phone books sitting at home, you know, taking the phone off the wall and calling people—where—

**Teresa:** I remember my mother sitting me down at the dining room table and saying, "When is the library open? Here is the, uh—the number in the phone book. You call."

**Travis:** Right? And that's how you would find stuff out. And now you can be out in the middle of the world and say, "Okay. Well, what's a good place to go—we need this thing right now. Like, we need diapers. Where's the closest store to find diapers? Okay, here it is," and now we map to it and go.

And so the thing is, is, like, that kind of freedom—it is care—you have to be careful, because it can be, uh—I don't wanna say addictive, because that's an actual problem—but habit-forming. And so it can be very habit-forming, but the fact of the matter is, the reason that we use our phones as much as we do is because it is a better alternative than going home, looking up the thing, and deciding you'll just do it tomorrow? Right? It's so much more convenient to just do it while you're standing right there.

And so people who give you a hard time about it do that because they like giving people a hard time about things, because they like feeling superior, not because you're doing anything wrong.

So if someone gives you a hard time about it say, like, "Yeah, I don't know where that store is. Do you, off the top of your head? No, I didn't think so. Okay, bye!"

[audience laughs]

**Travis:** And then walk away.

**Teresa:** Uh, I mean, the thing is, we use it for—just to—just this trip, Travis downloaded a taxi app. We use it for the underground. We used it for, uh, Yelp, to find, like he said, the diapers, to—to go to restaurants. Uh, some restaurants will even let you order online and pick it up takeaway, so I—I think that... it's—it's more of a necessity for everyday life. And so to—for how...

You were not in the wrong.

[audience laughs]

**Teresa:** To say, "My mother is dead."

[audience laughs loudly]

**Teresa:** Exactly!

**Travis:** And trust me, my mother *is* dead, and I give you full permission to use it.

[audience laughs loudly]

**Travis:** But here's what I would suggest—oh, sorry.

**Teresa:** But this, I would say that trying to make small talk with you, uh, this other person picked a—a sore subject, because at any other point in the day, I bet that they were also on their phone, surrounded by people.

**Travis:** Unless they've time traveled from the past, at which point you have way more to talk to them about.

[audience laughs]

**Travis:** Um, here's what you do next time. So, I'm gonna demonstrate. And Teresa, uh, let's pretend we're just standing at, like, a street corner. And you say to me, "How come you're on your phone? Blah blah blah," just say whatever.

**Teresa:** [quietly] Okay.

[pauses]

"Oh hey, what's on your phone?"

[pauses]

[audience laughs, applauds]

**Travis:** And that's what you can do next time! You do not have to engage—if they're like, "Oh, what would your mother say?" You can just not respond, as much as you want. 'Cause they're being rude.

**Teresa:** Let's get another question. Uh, back up to the balcony this time. How about here in the center. You have a jacket on—yes.

**Zoe:** Um, hi. My name is Zoe.

**Teresa:** Hello, Zoe.

**Travis:** Hi, Zoe.

**Zoe:** Um, and I was wondering—so sound like this, like an A—like an American person, but, um, I'm actually [crosstalk]—

**Travis:** I'm sorry.

[audience laughs]

**Zoe:** That's actually the—um, I'm from France, and I've never lived in the US. I've only lived here and in Paris. Um, and people always ask me, um, "Why don't you sound French?" And my default answer is, uh, "[exaggerated French accent] I can sound like that if you want me to."

**Teresa:** [laughs]

[audience laughs]

**Zoe:** And then—this has led to me putting on French accents in the US for.. one week, two weeks, and just faking it, because I would rather not be asked questions about American culture.

**Teresa:** Mm-hm.

**Zoe:** What is a better way to react to that question, and explain that I'm not American?

**Travis:** I think—

**Teresa:** Oh—yeah, go ahead.

**Travis:** —a lot like we were saying before, I think it—it depends a lot—so, when you get asked questions like that, one of the things that we often recommend is you kind of have to gauge how—like, the value of that relationship.

Like, if it's just a stranger saying, like, "Why don't you sound French?" Like, you don't have to answer that question. You can just say, like, "Because I don't!" And then keep walking.

And if it's someone that, like, you are friends with or that, like, you are invested in a relation—and if you just wanna say, like, "Well, you know, here's the reason why, and this and this and this."

But the fact of the matter is, you don't have to apologize or explain the way that you sound or look or act, or anything like that, because the answer is "I don't, I do, I am," whatever. Like, it just is—like, that's like someone saying to someone, "Why do you have brown hair?"

Like, that's a ridiculous question, because I do have brown hair. Like, "Why do you sound the way that you do?"

"I don't know. Like—" oh, I almost—I almost cursed, and this isn't a cursing show!

[audience laughs]

**Travis:** Um...

**Teresa:** You—you don't owe anyone that sort of explanation. Um, and so, like Travis said, if that's something that you wish to share with people, that's something that you can spend your energy on, if you want to. If you don't want to, then—then don't feel poorly. Don't feel bad about saying, "Because this is the way I talk." Anything like that.

**Travis:** And if someone says, "Why don't you sound French?" You can just say, "Why don't *you*?"

[audience laughs]

**Travis:** And then while they're looking very confused, run away.

**Teresa:** Run away!

[audience laughs]

**Teresa:** This is—that—that's a very *My Brother, My Brother, and Me* answer.

**Travis:** Run away.

[audience laughs]

**Teresa:** Pack your bags and move away.

**Travis:** Run away!

**Teresa:** Thank you very much.

**Travis:** Let's get another one. Uh—

**Teresa:** Your turn.

**Travis:** —uh, uh, uh—yes! Glasses—yes, you're pointing at yourself. No, not you pointing at yourself! *You* pointing at—

[audience laughs]

**Travis:** —yes! You're about to stand up! You have shorts! Spiky, kind of blond-ish hair! Okay, wait. This isn't who I was pointing at, but—

**Teresa:** That's alright. We'll get—we'll get them next time.

**Travis:** We'll do both of you.

**Teresa:** We'll do both of you.

**Travis:** Now, I do want to say, I'm so excited to hear your question. So when I said, "You're wearing glasses," what did you think?

[audience laughs]

**Teresa:** You don't have to answer that.

**Travis:** Okay. Go on. You're great.

**Dan:** Um, hi, I'm Dan. Um—

**Travis:** Hello.

**Dan:** —it's my best friend's and my oldest friend's engagement party?

**Teresa:** Okay.

**Dan:** In a few weeks.

**Travis:** Oh, I thought you were gonna say "Right now."

[audience laughs]

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** I'm like, "What are you doing here?!" No.

**Dan:** And I was just wondering, what is, like, the presents and, like—what are you meant to do at that? Because just, like, I'm 22, and none of my friends are engaged.

**Travis:** Okay. Just to clarify, are you asking what is a good present to get them, or what are you supposed to do an engagement party?

**Dan:** Er, uh...

**Travis:** Okay.

[audience laughs]

**Teresa:** Okay. Well, an engagement party is—I think of it like a joint birthday party, right? So it's—it's more of just a celebration of the occasion, so don't feel like you have to do anything specific. Uh, any activities that are planned regarding things like, uh, toasts or, um... do people have engagement cakes? We didn't have one.

**Travis:** I'm sure they do.

**Teresa:** Maybe they do.

**Travis:** An excuse to have cake? Yeah!

**Teresa:** Um, you shouldn't worry about any of those things, because those will be announced, and people will be led in—in the way that you're supposed to do those things.

**Travis:** Were—were they very recently engaged?

**Dan:** Yeah.

**Travis:** Okay. So you also, um, should avoid things like—there's a thing—it feels very correct to ask questions like, "Have you picked a date? What are your

plans?" But if they've only recently gotten engaged, the answer to that is probably, "I don't know!"

**Teresa:** "[makes "I don't know" sound]"

**Travis:** Um, so more of just congratulations are in order. Like, "Aw, I'm so happy for you two. Oh, that's so great. Aw—" right? But also, one of the most wonderful things about being an attendee at a party instead of, like, the host of the party—it's not about you! You don't have to worry about it at all! You just have to be there and say, "Oh, congratulations!" And then you can sit and talk to people and hang out, and there's, like—

**Teresa:** Eat your cake.

**Travis:** —eat your cake, question mark? Um, and just enjoy your time there. And—and—

**Teresa:** Let's—I mean, come on. There's gonna be cake. It's Britain.

**Travis:** There's gonna be cake. As far as, like, gifts—if gifts are expected—

**Teresa:** I hope that there's cake. There's gonna be cake, right? Probably?

[audience laughs]

**Travis:** Okay. We'll be there. Um—

**Teresa:** At—[laughs]

[audience laughs]

**Travis:** Um, sometimes you don't need to bring a gift—

[drink being poured]

—but if you do, you can usually get away with, like, a card or a—like, something small. Because here's the thing: the wedding is where you're expected to, like, get a gift off a registry and do all that.

**Teresa:** Now, wait a second.

**Travis:** If they're doing an engagement party with gifts—they're double dipping!

**Teresa:** [simultaneously] Gifts—wait—wha—I—[stammers]

[audience laughs]



**Teresa:** Gifts are never expected.

**Travis:** Encouraged.

**Teresa:** Gifts are a very nice thing to do if you feel so inclined. But traditionally, gifts are given at the wedding. And, uh, if you find yourself invited to things like the engagement party—and I believe it's called a hen do or bachelorette party—um, or a bachelor party, or a stag, right? Something like that?

**Audience Members:** Yeah.

**Teresa:** [relieved sigh] I'm doing so good.

[audience laughs]

**Teresa:** Um, then you may feel inclined to give small gifts along the way. Uh, but please don't—don't feel badly about just a card or—or a congratulatory handshake, or even maybe a—a bottle of wine or something? I mean, that's really—people just want you—they want to feel... like you're celebrating with them, and that's the reason why people give gifts, to celebrate.

**Travis:** And I'll tell you, Teresa and I, having been married for, like, 26 years at this point—

[audience laughs]

**Travis:** —um—the thing that is most appreciated at, like, engagement things or any time leading up to the wedding is someone saying, "Do you need help with anything? Is there anything I can do?" Right? Like, I'll take that over a gift any day, because—especially at the beginning of the process, it feels so overwhelming, and it feels like there's so many individual moving parts that if you're like, "And I'm happy to watch your dog while you go to whatever." Like, even that is incredibly useful.

**Teresa:** Have we done engagement parties?

**Travis:** I don't think we have.

**Teresa:** Oh, that's a really great episode!

**Travis:** We'll do that next, so thank you.

**Teresa:** Thank you!

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[theme music plays]

**Travis:** Hi, again! It's Travis. I sure do hope that you are enjoying this live episode. Uh, real quick, wanted to say a thank you note to our sponsors.

First, uh, *Shmanners* is sponsored in part by Zola. Zola takes the stress out of wedding planning with free wedding websites, save-the-dates and invitations, a wedding registry, and free, easy-to-use wedding planning tools.

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Uh, we're also excited to tell you about TriNova. We here in the McElroy household are a *big* fan of TriNova. One, their cleaning products are super effective. Um, especially, like, their glass cleaner. I'm—I've always been disappointed in glass cleaner, but not with TriNova. TriNova I really enjoy.

Plus, all their stuff smells really good. Um, and it's incredible. And they're designed to be effective with premium ingredients and not watered down, and it's a family-owned company, dedicated to great customer service! And I like things that are family-owned. Um, all of—like, most of my podcasts are with my family, so that's something that I appreciate.

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Now, back to the show!

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[music plays]

**Justin:** Hi everybody, my name is Justin McElroy.

**Sydnee:** And I'm Sydnee McElroy.

**Justin:** And together, we're the hosts of *Sawbones*, a marital tour of misguided medicine. What does that mean for you, the podcast consumer? Well, it means that you're gonna get a lot of stories about how we used to do weird stuff to people, in order to try to fix them.

**Sydnee:** Did you know that we used to think diseases were caused by bad smells? And that we used to eat mummies, for medicine!

**Charlie:** That's super funny. I kinda like it!

**Justin:** Well, thanks! And we hope you'll kind of like our show, *Sawbones*: a marital tour of misguided medicine. It's available every Friday, wherever fine podcasts are sold, or at its beautiful, picturesque home, at...

**Charlie:** [Maximumfun.org](http://Maximumfun.org)!

[music plays]

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[music plays]

**Mike:** The secret is out! I, Open Mike Eagle, officially had a wrestling match. And on the next *Tights and Fights*, I'm talkin' all about it. From the rap battles that got us started—

**Speaker One:** Open Mike... you ain't ready!

**Speaker Two:** Oh really? Oh really?

**Speaker One:** You'll fold, like some spaghetti! [laughs]

**Mike:** And to how I hurt myself in ways I didn't know I could. That day and the day before, I got so many texts from people who really care about me who were like, "Please don't break your neck." [through laughter] The only place you can get the full story is on the newest episode of *Tights and Fights*.

Find it on [Maximumfun.org](http://Maximumfun.org), or wherever you get podcasts.

[music plays]

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**Travis:** So, next question. Yes, glasses and pointing at yourself, yes.

[scattered laughter]

**Teresa:** That's right. You got it.

**Seamus:** Hi, my name is Seamus.

**Travis:** Hello.

**Teresa:** Hello!

**Seamus:** My central heating is broken [unintelligible]—

**Travis:** You want me to come fix it?

[audience laughs]

**Seamus:** Um, if you're offering.

[audience laughs]

**Travis:** Sure, I'll take a look! Okay, gotta go!

[audience laughs]

**Seamus:** Um, so this will involve me bringing, uh, a few different companies over to give me a quote on how much it would cost to fix it. But that involves, uh, inviting several parties into my house, and then rejecting some of them.

[audience laughs]

**Seamus:** What is the best way to do that?

**Travis:** Game show.

[audience laughs and cheers]

**Travis:** Um...

**Teresa:** Well, okay. First of all, um—

**Travis:** I said game show, I got nothin' else.

[audience laughs]

**Teresa:** —when you have people to your home, please make sure that the space is clear, that it's easy to get to, uh, that you have all of the—the necessary details ready, because if you have to say, "Hm, wait a second, this is—er—" and go through your phone or go through any kind of paper documents or anything like that, it's just going to be harder.

Um, obviously if someone requires a, uh—a fee for a quote, be prepared to pay that, and I just don't think that if anyone comes to your home and says, "No, we can't do it," and you say, "Well, you're not gettin' paid for it—" if that's what they require. Um, and I—

**Travis:** I—I—

**Teresa:** —I think that this is something that we... we cover a lot in the show. Saying what you need, saying what is, you know, uh, what's going to happen from here on because you are in control of this situation, is not rude at all.

And I know that that's difficult, as far as feelings go. But you're not being rude to a person to say, "That's not something that I'm willing to pay for right now. Thank you very much for your time."

And if this is the fee that they charge for coming to see your—the situation, then that's what you give them. Um, but it's—

**Travis:** And I will say—

**Teresa:** —it's not rude at all.

**Travis:** —just so you know, we just had someone out to do a quote at our house. And, like, I am, by every definition, an adult... I guess.

[audience laughs]

**Travis:** Um, and, like, I—like, I have a baby. There's literally another generation that I have made, younger than me, that, like, dictates that I am an adult. I own a house. And still, when someone I view as a *professional* says, "Oh, yeah, gotta get this taken—" my impulse is like, "[wobbly voice] Okay?"

[audience laughs]

**Travis:** Um, but the fact of the matter is, is like, you have to remember—is they are... they want to make money off of you. It is their business. And so you will feel a lot of pressure, and I—I would say that... I always look for somebody to work with on stuff like that that doesn't apply that pressure. That basically says, like, "Here's the things you need to know. Here's why I think you should do this. And if you are comfortable with that and you want to do it, give me a call."

Because it's possible that then that person will become the person that you work with forever, when something like that needs fixed. And so knowing right there that, like, you trust their opinion and they're not just trying to make a sale—that's usually the thing I look for.

And if you say to somebody, like, "I don't know if I'm ready to commit to this right now," and they give you a hard time about it, I also would say that that's not someone I would want to work with.

But in general, I also think it's important that up front you say, like, "I am talking to a couple different places to get some quotes, and I would love if you could come out and I could get a quote from you."

And then you can say when they come, like, "Okay, thank you so much for coming out. I'm still talking to a couple different places to get quotes. I'll let you know."

**Teresa:** And if you're having correspondence, obviously "I'll let you know—" um, it's—it's—it is polite to let them know that you will not be requiring their service, if—

**Travis:** And it will save you from a lot of follow-up phone calls and emails as well.

**Teresa:** Ugh, yes. Definitely.

**Travis:** Another question!

**Teresa:** Oh, it's my turn!

**Travis:** Yes.

**Teresa:** It's my turn to pick! Um... I'm going to go for... way in the back. Uh, you have colored hair. I can't tell what color it is. Yes.

**Laura:** Um—

**Teresa:** I think that there's a—there's a microphone coming towards you.

**Travis:** It's crowdsurfing your way. There we go.

[audience laughs]

**Laura:** My name's Laura.

**Teresa:** Hello.

**Travis:** Hello.

[scattered cheers]

**Laura:** And rec—recently I've had some people come and stay with me, and they offered to help clear up, and I'm a bit of an anxious person when it comes to cleaning. I don't like other people cleaning my space if I can help it.

Is there a polite way to say to someone, "I know you're trying to be nice, but please don't clean my things."

**Teresa:** [laughs] I think that this is—this is—

**Travis:** That.

[audience laughs]

**Teresa:** Definitely. This is twofold, though. Um, I think that as—as a house guest, I always recommend the two-offer rule. So, I offer the first time, you say "No, that's okay." I offer the second time, and if you say "No, that's okay," I have to step back and say, "This is what they really mean. They need me to sit here and let them do it."

**Travis:** 'Cause the first time is, like, the polite, like, "No, thank you!" I'm like, "Aw, are you sure? 'Cause I'd love to help." "Oh, okay."

**Teresa:** Everyone expects a decline on the first try.

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Teresa:** Um, but then—I think that it's important that, uh, especially if these are people that you care about—and we talk about the relationship the person—uh, if this is a relationship that you value, I think that it's perfectly appropriate to say, "I have a very specific way of cleaning, and I would love for you to relax while I take care of it."

I think something that you can do is to offer them something where their hands are occupied. Maybe a drink?

[audience laughs]

**Teresa:** Uh, so that they *can't* help you.

[audience laughs]

**Teresa:** Or—or put on something. Maybe a—maybe a movie or—or offer them the television. Something where they will be occupied, and you can go about your business.

**Travis:** Yeah, because you don't want them to feel like, "Well, I'm just gonna put everything on hold until I'm done... and then we can re-engage with each other." Because that would also make me as a guest feel very uncomfortable.

If you're like, "No, we're gonna divide and conquer. *You* watch TV, and *I'll* clean!"



Um, but I also think that if you have house guests coming and you're kind of preparing for the situation—like, having in mind something that you would be comfortable with them doing—like, for example you might with dishes say, like, "Okay, you wash and I'll dry."

**Teresa:** Or even just put them in the sink, and you'll take care of it later. And then no one will mind—I mean, obviously they'll be gone, so you'll take care of it afterwards, but they're out of sight.

**Travis:** Yeah. Or something like taking the garbage out, that they can do and you're not particular about. If there's something that you feel comfortable doing, say, like, "Well, yeah. If you wanna take care of this..." and that might help. But I think in general—

**Teresa:** And if there isn't, don't apologize. [laughs]

**Travis:** Yeah. I think in general just saying, like, "No thank you."

Like, "Oh, let me help!"

"No, I'm good! Thank you very much. Uh, I'll take care of this. You take care of yourself, and, uh—"

**Teresa:** Like I said, giving them something to occupy themselves will help.

**Travis:** Let's do another question.

**Teresa:** One—go ahead. It's your turn.

**Travis:** Okay. Uh, I'm going to say, the tropical shirt and glasses. Yes.

**Teresa:** Is it tropical?

**Ryan:** Ish?

**Teresa:** It's—it's highly patterned.

**Travis:** Sure. Wait, so it's *not* palm trees?

**Ryan:** It is.

**Teresa:** Okay.

**Travis:** So it's—so it's tropical!

[audience laughs]

**Teresa:** Sorry. That's all me.

**Travis:** It's not important.

**Teresa:** Don't worry. It's not important.

**Travis:** It's just for my own—I didn't know how bad my eyes were at this point in my life. Might be bad.

**Teresa:** It's the—it's the lights. It's fine.

**Ryan:** Partially tropical.

**Travis:** Okay.

[audience laughs]

**Travis:** If we both need to win, then fine.

**Teresa:** [laughs loudly]

[audience laughs]

**Ryan:** Um, hi, I'm Ryan.

**Teresa:** Hello, Ryan.

**Travis:** I thought you were saying, "I'm right."

**Teresa:** [laughs]

[audience laughs]

**Teresa:** Water, Travis. Water.

**Ryan:** I'm sorry, yes, hello. I work as a cleaner in a police station... which is mostly good, 'cause I get to clean toilets and just put my headphones in and listen to—

**Travis:** You put your headphones in the toilet?

[audience laughs]

**Teresa:** Pay no attention to him. Continue.

**Ryan:** I just [unintelligible] with headphones.

**Travis:** [laughs] Make yourself useful. I get it.

**Teresa:** The more you acknowledge, the more he does it.

[audience laughs]

**Ryan:** I'm giving you an excuse to drink.

**Travis:** Thank you.

**Teresa:** Cheers.

[audience laughs]

**Ryan:** But this also means I have to clean offices, with people in them. That want to talk to me. And I'm a very socially anxious person. I don't like a lot of people.

[scattered laughter]

**Ryan:** Um, so what's a polite way to... let people know that I just want to Hoover and don't want to talk to them?

**Teresa:** Um, I—I think that, uh, one of the things that you can do is—often when people start a conversation, they start with a question. Um, so if you give a

very concise, one or two-word answer, I think that shuts people down right away.  
Um—

**Travis:** Still being polite. Still a polite response.

**Teresa:** Still being polite. Because—

**Travis:** Like, "Yes, yes." Like, okay, cool.

**Teresa:** —'cause you are answering their question. I—I don't suggest that you ignore them completely, because that's—that's a whole other thing. But, like—

**Travis:** No, that's what I'm about to suggest. But go on.

[audience laughs]

**Teresa:** Uh, but one or two-word answers I think usually tell people that you're not interested in talking. Um, and then I think one of the things that you can do is—I mean, you're—you're Hoovering. You're using the vacuum. Um, it's on, right? So... "[holding back laughter] Can't hear you."

[audience laughs]

**Teresa:** I mean, that's close to his answer, right? [laughs]

**Travis:** What I was going to say was that if you're using your headphones when you're doing the bathrooms, are you taking your headphones off before you start cleaning offices? 'Cause I would just leave them on. And—and the reason is, is that a lot of the times, like, if you—

**Teresa:** Ooh, maybe get those—

**Travis:** —okay.

**Teresa:** —*big* headphones. The—the big ones that go over your ears, not just the little, like, mobile ones, where they're—

**Travis:** And then draw on them just a frowny face.

**Teresa:** [laughs]

[audience laughs]

[mic thumping]

**Travis:** Uh, because the reason—

**Teresa:** Oh no, I keep touching my mic. I'm sorry!

**Travis:** —because if I was working in an office and somebody came in to clean, I would feel like I should acknowledge them. Like, *they'll* think it's weird if I don't start talking to them.

'Cause most of time, people don't wanna talk to each other, in general.

[audience laughs]

**Travis:** And so I think that—

**Teresa:** I don't wanna talk to you, so.

**Travis:** That's fine. And I think if you're doin' the headphones and somebody asks you a question, then you can, like, "Oh," and talk to them then, right? And then return to the headpho—whatever you need to do. But I think an indicator like that of, like, "It's okay... if I just come in and clean and you keep working, and that's fine."

I think you continuing to wear the headphones, if you're allowed to at work, is perfectly fine. Because, uh—most people want to just do their work and not bother with the person who's just walked into the room, so giving them permission to do that with headphones would be the way that I would go.

**Teresa:** Yeah. Yes or no answers, and *big* headphones.

**Travis:** Big headphones. I think we have time for, like, two more questions.

**Teresa:** Sure. Um, I will go. Let's see. We haven't been in the balcony for a while. Here—I think you have glasses? Oh, someone—[gasps] here we go. Here comes the microphone, filling in the time.

**Tom:** Hello, my name's Tom.

**Teresa:** Hello.

**Travis:** Hi!

**Tom:** Um, so I had a few hours to kill before the show today, so I went to Camden Market for some ice cream. Um, I went to this amazing place called—

**Audience Members:** [unintelligible]!

**Teresa:** [gasps] He—

**Travis:** Why did that make somebody laugh? What, why was that funny?

[audience laughs]

**Travis:** Camden Market! Ahh.

**Teresa:** We went there! We went there yesterday. It was lovely.

**Tom:** Oh, really? Well, I went to this amazing place called Chin Chins.

[scattered cheers]

**Teresa:** It's well loved.

**Tom:** It's amazing. Um, and I loved—it was amazing, but as I was eating it, I realized it was dripping down my hands, I had it all over my mouth—and I was sitting in the middle of the street, and people were just looking at me like I was a monster.

[audience laughs]

**Tom:** And it occurred to me, I'm 28 and I still haven't figured out how to eat an ice cream properly.

[audience laughs]

**Tom:** Is there... a proper way?

[audience laughs]

**Teresa:** To eat ice cream... [laughs] um, I—I have to say—

**Travis:** [simultaneously] Okay. I—I do wanna say—

**Teresa:** —wait a second.

**Travis:** No, wait—

[audience laughs]

**Teresa:** No—ah—no—oh—oh!

**Travis:** Oh!

**Teresa:** [holding back laughter] I'm gonna say, you don't know those people. It doesn't matter!

**Travis:** Yeah.

[audience laughs]

**Travis:** That's exactly what I was gonna say!

**Teresa:** Wait a second...

**Travis:** Because here's the thing. This is a just kind of good rule of thumb. If you have a story like that where you're like, "I was somewhere and everyone was judging me," you remember it. They don't. Right?

They're gonna walk by you and see that, and then they're gonna see 800 other people throughout the course of the day, right? But when you're someone who's the focus of something, it's a lot easier for that to be memorable for you, and think, "Everybody thought I was a monster!" or whatever. But, like, they don't—I—I couldn't tell you anybody I walked by today. And, like, I don't mean that as a joke. I just wasn't really paying attention to them. But if they were doing something—

**Teresa:** There were a few people who are here at the show who we said hello to—

**Travis:** I remember you!

**Teresa:** We remember you.

**Travis:** I remember *you*.

[scattered cheers]

**Travis:** But, like, that kind of thing, especially if you feel like you're doing something that you should be embarrassed by, and someone looks at you, it's also really easy to read into their face that they're judging you because they looked at you, when really they just looked at you because they were walking by you and they noticed you.

**Teresa:** There's somebody down the street from you who's doing something crazier. They already forgot.

**Travis:** I—I think in general, like... enjoy your ice cream? Like there isn't—

[audience laughs]

**Teresa:** 'Cause ice cream is delicious.

**Travis:** Yeah! There's no wrong way to eat ice cream.

**Teresa:** And, uh—

**Travis:** Unless you put it up your nose, and then, uh... mistake.

[audience laughs]

**Teresa:** You can—

**Travis:** Listen, I've been there.

[audience laughs]



**Travis:** If you're gonna put it up your nose, go with the thin end of the cone first.

[audience laughs loudly]

**Travis:** It still won't work, but you'll be a little bit more successful than if you go the other way, *trust* me.

**Teresa:** And some practical mom advice, you can wrap a napkin outside of the cone. Uh, and then it will slow it down from dripping down your hand and your elbow.

**Travis:** Or just bite the bottom off.

**Teresa:** No—

**Travis:** Suck it through.

**Teresa:** —[through laughter] and suck it through—

[audience laughs]

**Travis:** 'Cause then *no one*'ll judge you.

[audience laughs]

**Teresa:** I—I can't believe—

**Travis:** "[through a full mouth] Hi, everybody!" [normal voice] It's fine.

**Teresa:** —I can't believe these are the things you're teaching our daughter.

**Travis:** Yeahhh! She's gonna be so cool.

[audience laughs]

**Travis:** Alright, one more!

**Teresa:** Last one. Your choice.

**Travis:** Um... I'm going to go with the person in I think, like, the pink shirt, who seems kind of embarrassed that you have a question.

[scattered laughter]

[pauses]

**Teresa:** What a great descriptor.

**Travis:** Yeah.

[audience laughs]

**Carrie:** No, I was pretty embarrassed. Um, but—

[audience laughs]

**Carrie:** So, um, my name is Carrie.

**Teresa:** Hello.

**Travis:** Hello!

**Carrie:** Um, basically—I have a disability, so I carry a walking stick, but I don't *always* carry a walking stick. Um, and so my colleagues often forget in the office that I have a disability, and forget to, like, offer to get me a drink or something like that when they go down to the kitchen, which is really far away.

Um, and I just wondered if there was a polite way to kind of... remind someone, "Please remember that I really need water, 'cause I've been here for five hours, and can't get up?" [laughs] And, uh—without sort of being, like, "Hey! I'm disabled! And you forgot me." [laughs]

[audience laughs]

**Carrie:** You know, I don't—and I also don't wanna, like, embarrass myself by just constantly being like, "Hey, I'm the sick one!" You know, so, yeah.

**Teresa:** Um, I think that it's perfectly fine, and it's not rude at all if you see someone getting up, walking in that direction, to ask them, "Are you going to the

kitchen? Would you mind bringing me back a cup of water?" Something like that. Um, as long as you're not *demanding* about it, I don't—

**Travis:** Which you don't seem like you would be.

[audience laughs]

**Travis:** Especially since you so gingerly raised your hand to ask a question. I think you're okay.

**Teresa:** Um, I don't think that anyone who's going in that direction would say anything other than, "Certainly, I can." Or, uh, "Actually, I'm going to the toilet, but I'll—when I come back, I'll get you something." Um—

**Travis:** I think in general that's a thing that—'cause we come up against this a lot on the show.

**Teresa:** We do, we do.

**Travis:** Where, like, it would be—in a perfect world, everyone would think about everyone else all the time, and they would be considerate in the way that we wish that they would. But the problem is, is that people have a lot of their own stuff going on at all times—

**Teresa:** We are so self-consumed, really.

**Travis:** Yeah, and it's—it's very easy to read into that as, like, selfishness or ignoring you or, even worse, like, purposefully ignoring you. But the fact of the matter is, that person might be thinking about the bill they forgot to pay or, like, "Ooh, did I remember to—" and, like—

**Teresa:** And whatever's due next—

**Travis:** Right.

**Teresa:** —or their emails, or—or something like that.

**Travis:** And so I would say that, uh, having been a coworker many times, being reminded of something nice I could do for someone is very appreciated. Because one, it's nice to be nice, and two, it might give them a chance to distract

themselves from whatever thing is worrying them and that they're thinking about, and so I don't think you should think about it as, like, "I don't wanna bother them," so much as like you're giving them an opportunity to do something nice for you. And, like, feel good, and be nice.

And, like, I think that would be appreciated. Um, especially since, just in the three seconds we've been interacting, you seem nice. And so I'm betting that people like you, and would like to do nice stuff for you. And it's okay to, like, kind of nudge them towards it.

**Teresa:** And this is something that we encounter again and again, is it's not rude to ask for what you want. To ask for—

**Travis:** In fact, it's better.

**Teresa:** —in fact, it's better. Because, um—you know, I haven't ever encountered anyone who can read my mind. And so in order to get what I need, I have to ask people for it.

**Travis:** And the thing is, Teresa and I—we've been together for nine plus years at this point, and there is—well, aside from Bebe, there is no human being I think about more, and that I think about, like, her needs and wants more, and I still don't know what she's think—like, I still can't read her mind. And—and so, like, if I... if she counted on me to do that, I would constantly disappoint her, instead of just *sometimes* disappointing her..

[audience laughs]

**Travis:** ...like I do now. But the thing is, is, like, so—if—if that's true, and if I'm very devoted and I'm constantly, like, worrying about her and making sure that she's okay, and I *still* don't think about it enough to, like, "I bet she's thirsty." Like, I don't know. And so she has to ask to for it, right?

So if that's true, a coworker who's, like, on a deadline, who has, like, 20 other coworkers or more—they're probably not reading your mind either. So I think it's completely okay—and, in fact, I would encourage you that it is more polite to say what you need, let them do it, rather than them come back and be like, "Oh. I should've gotten you something. I'm so sorry."

Um... does that answer—I think that answers—hi, I love you.

**Teresa:** I love you too.

[audience aww's]

**Teresa:** That was very sweet, darling.

**Travis:** I know. Um—

[audience laughs]

**Travis:** —so, that's gonna do it for us. Thank you, uh, everybody who came out. Um—uh, and thank you to everybody who didn't.

[audience laughs]

**Travis:** Um, also—

**Teresa:** Who is listening!

[mic thumping]

**Travis:** —yeah, everybody who's listening—

**Teresa:** Oh, no!

[audience laughs]

**Travis:** Uh, tomorrow, I've got a Q&A and signing event here at—at London Pod Fest at 12:30, here at King's Place. Um, I think there are still some tickets available for that. They could probably help you out at the box office, or you can go to [bit.ly/travislondon](http://bit.ly/travislondon).

[scattered laughter]

**Travis:** Um, which is also... my, uh, alter ego action hero.

[audience laughs]

**Travis:** The script's coming out later this year. Um—but let's see. Thank you to King's Place, thank you to the London Podcast Festival. It has been absolutely lovely.

Thank you to the custom agent who still let Teresa and I through, even though we had no idea how to answer any of their questions.

[audience laughs]

**Travis:** Um, thank you to Bebe, uh, for being cool backstage, just hangin' out by herself.

[audience laughs loudly]

**Travis:** Thank you to Elizabeth—

**Teresa:** [simultaneously] My sister—

**Travis:** —yeah, Elizabeth is babysitting.

**Teresa:** —my sister is watching her. [laughs]

**Travis:** Um—

**Teresa:** Don't scare people like that! We talked about Mother's Ruin!

**Travis:** Um—

[audience laughs and cheers loudly]

**Travis:** Oh no! Who else do we normally thank? What do we normally say?

**Teresa:** We normally thank Brent "brentalfloss" Black for the, uh—for writing our theme music. We also also thank Kayla M. Wasil for our Twitter thumbnail art, and we thank Keely Weis Photography for this beautiful picture she took of us, which is the cover art for our fan-run Facebook group, if you'd like to join. Uh, you can tweet at us @shmannerscast. You—

**Travis:** The name of that fan-run Facebook group is *Shmanners* Fanners.

[audience laughs]

**Teresa:** Uh, you can tweet at us, or you can suggest, uh, show topics at [shmatterscast.com](http://shmatterscast.com).

**Travis:** Uh, I also wanna say, we now have some merchandise that is a very, very cute t-shirt, designed by Kate Leth, as well as a button set designed by Kate Leth, uh, that have a dove and a deer saying hello to each other. It's—

[audience aww's]

**Travis:** I know!

[audience laughs]

**Travis:** It's very cute. You can find it at [mcelroymerch.com](http://mcelroymerch.com). Um... oh, [Maximumfun.org](http://Maximumfun.org), of course.

[audience laughs]

**Travis:** There is a ton of amazing other shows, including, like I said, *Judge John Hodgman*, that is going to be here I believe next weekend, so get tickets for that if you haven't already. And I think that's going to do it for us, so join us again next time!

**Teresa:** No RSVP required!

**Travis:** You've been listening to *Shmatters*...

**Teresa:** Manners, *Shmatters*. Get it?

[audience cheers loudly]

**Teresa:** Thank you, thank you. Thank you very much! Thank you!

[theme music plays]