

Shmanners 198: Hugging

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Teresa: I'm Teresa, and I like warm hugs.

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 doing well. How are you?

Travis: I'm a little, uh—I'm a little under the weather.

Teresa: Oh, no.

Travis: Yes. Um... a little allergy stuff.

Teresa: Busy, busy week.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: I'm just a sleepy boy.

Teresa: Aww...

Travis: You know? And you know what always makes me feel better when I'm sleepy?

Teresa: Is it a hug?

Travis: It's a hug.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: I do—I'm—I'm—here's the thing, and we're going to discuss this a lot—we're talking about hugs this week, about hugging.

Teresa: Indeed.

Travis: And... easily, easily the most asked-about, like, question and topic is, like, how to say, "I don't want a hug." Or "I—"

Teresa: I have lots of tactics and tips for that.

Travis: I imagine. And that's the thing—so, here's the thing: I am a hugger. I have—

Teresa: And I enjoy your hugs.

Travis: Oh, thank you. I have been told I give good hugs. Um, and if anyone ever wants a hug—it's one of my favorite things. I like—I like hugs. So if you ever, like, meet me at a convention or something and you would like a hug, cool. Totally cool. Doesn't bother me at all.

Teresa: Wasn't this suggested by someone? I want you to look at that.

Travis: It was. I will. I will look it up.

Teresa: While I tell my hugging story. My family—

Travis: Uh—you have a hugging story?

Teresa: Well, my—my hug origin... story.

Travis: Okay. It was a dark and stormy night.

Teresa: [laughs] My family was not really—this may surprise you. Not really that into hugs. We always did, like, a hug and a kiss, "I love you, goodbye," right?

Travis: Uh-huh.

Teresa: But it wasn't really, like, anything other than "This is part of the—the official... greeting," and thing like that, right?

Travis: This was recommended to us by Shannon. Thank you, Shannon!

Teresa: Thank you. Uh, but I didn't really start getting into hugs until I majored in musical theater!

Travis: Oh yeah, very huggy crowd.

Teresa: Yes. Such hugs. And it—at first I was like, "Wow. You guys... let's ease up on the hugs."

Um, and then—and then it was more like... I learned about why, right? Musical theater people... they have—they have so much emotion. That's the reason that you sing—

Travis: Almost too much, some might say.

Teresa: —that's the reason that you sing in a show, right? That's the justification, that there's so much emotion that we have to sing, or we wouldn't be able to explain how we feel.

Travis: Sure.

Teresa: And I think that that is a trait that a lot of musical theater performers share. They just have so many feelings.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: That they need to—they need to hug it out. And I'm okay with that.

Travis: It's true. The thing... the thing about it—as someone who enjoys hugs and, uh, who sees—hey, hugs. They're everywhere. Um, I—I always feel bad—like... it must be a bummer to be someone who does not like to be touched and does not like hugs in a world in which hugs seem to be, like, a fairly de facto thing at this point.

Of just, like—like, when I first meet someone, right? Well, I used to. I'm much more careful about it now. but I would just, like, go for the hug. Now I ask. Now I say, like, "Is it okay if I touch you?"

And—but, like, I used to just say, "Oh, nice to meet you!" [holding back laughter] and I'd go for the hug, right? And, like, that's the first impression to some people, you know?

Teresa: Yeah. Well, it wasn't always this way. So, uh, as late as the 19th century, hugging was used more for imagery, right? So ships hugged the shore, boxers hugged the ropes of the ring. Um, people hugged themselves with the knowledge of their own virtue. Um—

Travis: Okay. That last one, that one's pretty pompous, huh?

Teresa: I mean, it's—it's literary.

Travis: Oh, I—I comfort myself at night, [through laughter] hugging myself with the knowledge of my own virtue.

Teresa: It was a literary thing.

Travis: Oh.

Teresa: But it was also something that women could do to each other. They could hug each other, with affection. And, uh, you could hug someone who was ill, right? It was kind of like a—a compassionate gesture.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Um, but it was—it was far too intimate, really, for anyone else. Um, but today, like you said, hugging is everywhere.

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: Um, and there are a lot of notable people who... I don't wanna say "Have been—"

Travis: Have been hugged?

Teresa: "—*caught* hugging?" But I do wanna say that it's—it's become... the hug as an image, um, especially in America, started—excuse me, in the US—um, started probably with Jimmy Carter.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: He was often photographed hugging world leaders. Um, whereas before, that wasn't, like, a thing in the US? It's always been a little more... in the way of, uh, the Russians, the Mediterranean cultures.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Places like that. Um, but, you know, Jimmy Carter had, like, fireside chats, and he wore—

Travis: Yeah. Very southern charm, too, that Jimmy Carter.

Teresa: —he wore cardigans and stuff.

Travis: He was very Mr. Rogers, is how it sounds like you're describing him?

Teresa: He was a little bit.

Travis: I mean, I don't—listen. I don't know anything about the man's politics, and I don't know about him, so it feels weird to suddenly just invoke the name of one of my favorite humans who ever existed. But the way you were describing him makes him sound like a Rogers-esque character.

Teresa: I would say so, yes. Some of his most notable hugs include members of his staff, uh, Willy Nelson, Tip O'Neill, uh, Leonid Brezhnev, uh—

Travis: In case anyone was wondering, I would hug the heck out of Willy Nelson.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Given the opportunity—I bet that man gives good hugs.

Teresa: There are some very famous, uh, photographs of him hugging the survivors of the Iranian—Iranian hostage crisis. Uh, and, you know, um... the—let's see.

Um, at the time of this printing, uh, of my... uh... my research, which was in 2011, he had just been photographed hugging it out with a senior member of Hamas. So, like... he's—he's kind of a—as, um, Catherine Howell states in this—in this article, "The Hugger in Chief."

Travis: Oh, I get it.

Teresa: Yeah. Yeah.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Um, so what I'd like to talk a little more about as far as hugging goes is what's—

Travis: What is it?

Teresa: What—what am hug?

Travis: What am hug?

Teresa: Um... more like—I wanna talk about what hug does.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Okay? Um, so there is—

Travis: What hug does?

Teresa: What hug does? There's data showing that hugging provides a buffer to stress, right? Uh, and this is a—

Travis: This is, I assume, for people who enjoy hugs—

Teresa: I'll get to that.

Travis: —because I—I would say the exact opposite is true if you don't like hugs.

Teresa: Um, so according to Srini—hmm. Srini Pillay. Pillay? Srini Pillay. That's what I'm gonna say. Uh, who is a Harvard psychiatrist who studies brain science. Um, people will often recommend hugging as a form of social bonding that calms down the fight or flight system, right? Because a good, solid, *wanted* hug, uh, releases oxytocin, which may improve—

Travis: [dramatically] Release the oxytocin.

Teresa: —[laughs quietly] which may improve the immune system, and is shown to lower blood pressure. It's one of the hormones—the bonding hormones that's released during breastfeeding. Um, and strangely enough, during labor and delivery.

Travis: Hmm.

Teresa: Uh, but when the hug is awkward, Pillay warns, "I can't imagine what is actually happening is that the person is becoming calmer."

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: That's—that's the thing, right? So, they're aren't a lot of studies that show what happens to a body when it's an unwanted hug. It's more just the benefits of hugging? Um, and it's different in every culture, really. But in our culture specifically... it's become—it's become almost a character trait, right?

Um, because... as—people in the US. especially are really unsure of the hug. And I—and I think that is probably going to be reflected in a lot of our questions.

Travis: Uh-huh.

Teresa: Um... Lizzie Post, as we know, who is a co-president of the Emily Post Institute—

Travis: [posh voice] Indeed.

Teresa: —our guru, patron saint—uh, believes that we hug too much. And this is the reasoning: she says, "The reason I can say that is because we have all these reactions. It gets awkward, or someone has to say something ahead of the hug to

stop the hug from happening. If we were all really okay with hugging, we'd just hug."

Travis: Yeah. You know, if you think about it, just in the way that you've described it up to this point, it is, to—to use a word you mentioned earlier, intimate, right?

Teresa: Exactly.

Travis: If you think about the amount of contact your body is making with another person's body, right? It is... it's—it's a lot.

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: Um, compared to something like a—a handshake. Um, and it also would make you feel very vulnerable with someone you don't know—oh, now I'm—I'm comin' around on the opposite! I'm comin' around the other side on this now!

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Oh, boy.

Teresa: Okay. Here, I think, is the defining characteristic, right? Ms. Manners, Judith Martin, says that "It's a bizarre notion that hugging should inspire affectionate goodwill rather than express it."

That is the point, right? So we're not... it does feel awkward to hug someone in, like—in the hopes of making it feel good, right?

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Whereas you want to hug someone *because* you feel good, because they make you feel good. So you hug each other to express that feeling.

Travis: I think—o—okay.

Teresa: Not to inspire it.

Travis: The way that you've described it—I think that is the reason I like hugs so much. Is, like, I—I am very, uh, welcoming, and very, like, literally inclusive. Um, where, like, I want everyone to feel included in the events, right?

Teresa: Exactly.

Travis: And so I like to hug on meeting someone, from my perspective to say, "I—I am accepting you. You—I'm—you know, you're in, as far as I'm concerned!"

Teresa: That makes—and that is—

Travis: Not to make them like me. Because what's not to like?

Teresa: [laughs] That's a wonderful sentiment. But I think that—but what Ms. Manners is trying to say is that instead of hugging to include people, when they feel included they will hug.

Travis: I guess that's true.

Teresa: Um, and, you know, the—I guess that the hope of the hugs that we—that we give is that everything else will kind of follow, when it really should be, like, the finished deal.

Travis: Right. Okay.

Teresa: Um, she has a, uh—a really great deferment method, which is what I want to talk about next. Um—

Travis: Because this is the thing. I—I—I hate to keep reiterating it, but I will. When I talk about hugging someone, it's always with consent now, right? It's always with—with—"Is it okay if I hug you? Are you a hugger? Is it okay if I touch you?" now, 'cause now I *know*. I *know*.

Do you wanna know why? You know, what changed this for me is—I think we were doing a meet and greet after a show, or it was a photo line or something. And I was having a photo taken, and I went to put my arm around this person, and they, like, shrunk, and were kind of, like, *visibly* upset as I put my hand around their shoulder.

And, like, the idea that I was making them—not only uncomfortable, but also, like, ruining the moment for them? Like, in any way—

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: —and, like, I saw that, and I had never thought, like, "Is that—you don't want me to touch—oh! Oh, that—" so now I always ask. And it's, like, for consent and comfort and ease and... you know, all that stuff.

Teresa: Uh, so Ms. Manners—her, uh, her deferment technique is what I wanted to talk about.

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: Um, she notes that when things, uh, in the world start panicking people—things like HIV, Ebola, Swine Flu—it is usually accompanied in a downturn in the cultural appropriateness of hugs.

Travis: Uh-huh.

Teresa: You know, 'cause people don't wanna get sick, I guess. Um, so what she suggests is a smile and a slight wave, kind of pointy thing towards the face. More like a, "Uhh, I'm kind of sick," or something. Right?

Travis: Oh, okay.

Teresa: So that people feel like, "Oh, I *could* hug you, but you're right. It's probably better that we keep our distance with a handshake, so that we don't spread germs."

Travis: Now, I—I think that that is a good method if it is, like, a one-time, like, "Ooh, I don't feel like hugging this stranger," or something, right?

But I advocate strongly that if you are someone who does not like hugging, does not like touching, or does not like hugging, like, except for instances where you feel comfortable, or whatever. Whatever—however you feel about it, I think you should say that to people. Um, say, like, "Oh, I'm—I'm not really comfortable with hugs."

Teresa: I agree.

Travis: I wish you all could see this amazing maneuver Teresa is doing where she's holding the bottle for Baby Dot with her cheek while going through her notes. It's incredible. Mom of the Year!

Um, I—I think... [sighs] it's one of those things where—early on in mine and Tybee's friendship Tybee said, "Uh, I am not comfortable with—I'm not really a hugger."

Not that she doesn't hug at all, right? It just is not a thing that she immediately springs to? And it made me feel like a better friend to be able to—like, to know that, and to be able to show, like, "Okay, good. I will—I will, uh, honor that. I will respect that."

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: And it made me feel like a better friend, you know what I mean? So, like, I think telling people "I am not comfortable with hugs," gives them the opportunity to be a better and closer friend.

Teresa: And I think that—these tips that I'm gonna give you also make you kind of examine yourself so that you can decide whether or not you're a hugger.

Travis: Yes, yes.

Teresa: Um, so the first one is, you need to decide in the seconds before you meet someone if you are going to hug them, okay? I usually try and either go for the handshake or a little wave, right?

Um, but if you—if you can't figure that out in, like, the two seconds before someone approaches you—

Baby Dot: [drinking noises]

Teresa: —what—what you can do is try and read what they're gonna go for.

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: So if someone wants to greet you with a handshake, they're probably gonna angle their shoulder to you, and put that arm out, right? Whereas if someone wants to hug, they'll approach with two arms open and their torso facing directly towards you.

Travis: Now, if they're coming in in a serpentine maneuver—

Teresa: Mm—

Travis: —you wanna watch out, because they're up to something.

Baby Dot: [drinking noises]

Travis: But if they're zigging and zagging—but yeah, in general, I mean, that's the thing of, like, trying to... it's hard. Um, if—if you... [sighs] I'm trying to think of a right way to phrase it, because the right answer is always to ask and get consent.

Teresa: Right.

Travis: Um, but body language is also important. If you see someone coming in and all that stuff of, like, if they're moving for it, if they're not, all of those things. You're absolutely right.

Teresa: Exactly. Okay. And if you—if you can't do that, if you can't recognize what it is they're going to do—

Baby Dot: [drinking noises]

Teresa: —you need to initiate yourself, right? So again, you can stick out your hand. Uh, you know, before they really even get to you, right? So *they* know what's coming.

Um, or... one of the things that you can do is you can start a wave, to begin with, right? So that they see, "Oh, we are not even going to touch. They're waving at me."

Travis: Right.

Teresa: Um, but... if either of those don't work, you can redirect—a little—uh, it's a little trickier. What you need to do is you need to use that shoulder to kind of, like, take yourself out of the hug space, okay? So, you thrust out your hand and turn your shoulder like you're kind of dodging a punch, I guess?

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: One foot forward with the shoulder and then one foot back. Um, so that it—it presents less of a target, right? [laughs quietly] So the—the hug would

come from straight on, uh, torso to torso, whereas if you have that shoulder and foot stuck out, you've only got a little bit of—of hug space available.

Travis: That also is good advice for a charging bull. If—if a bull is charging—

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: —present a smaller target.

Teresa: Um... and then the last one. Here are some ways to escape a hug. The first one is, start patting their back. A couple pats. That's, like, a signal. "Okay, we're done here." Right?

Travis: I—I—[laughs quietly] I can't remember. I—I used to joke that it was the one, two, three, we're done. Pat, pat, pat, we're done.

Teresa: Yeah, sure.

Travis: "Ahh, okay."

Baby Dot: [drinking noises]

Teresa: That's the signal. The signal for "We're done." Um, also, if you—if you can't avoid the hug, give in to the hug and then quickly let go.

Travis: Yes. What helps with that, too—

Teresa: So it's, like, the—what is it Ross used to do for—for Rachel? The hug and release.

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: Right?

Travis: And—and I think it also helps, um, in that circumstance, only making contact with, like, your upper che—your shoulders.

Teresa: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm.

Travis: Right? Instead of, like—so that way you are already *kind* of withdrawn from the hug to begin with.

Teresa: And you can do the one-arm half hug.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Uh, that—

Travis: Or pick 'em up and throw 'em.

Teresa: What? No. [laughs]

Travis: No?

Teresa: No.

Travis: Okay. That's my style—I—I used to do the bear hug, and now I'm saying that's not enough, and now I just throw 'em over my shoulders, spin 'em around for a while, *really* get in there... deep, deep hugging. This is my new style of hugging, and I call it fireman's hug.

[pauses]

Teresa: What?

Travis: Like a fireman's carry is when you put someone over your shoulders like that? It's a fireman's hug [holding back laughter] where I kind of hug 'em—it's not important.

Teresa: Over—you hug 'em over your shoulder?

Travis: Yeah. And then, uh, I do some really cool wrestling maneuvers. Like a tombstone. It's not important.

Teresa: Okay. Who's Tombstone?

Travis: No, it's a wres—it's a maneuver.

Teresa: Wha—the tombstone is a maneuver?

Travis: Yeah, the—uh, the—uh... yeah. Don't worry about it.

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: 'Cause now—that the Under—the Undertaker did it? And it's, like—it's not important. Don't worry about it.

[pauses]

Teresa: Okay. This is wrestling, right? Yes.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Okay. [laughs]

Travis: But all of my wrestling knowledge is, like, from the 90—like, the late 90's. I don't know anything about the wrestlers *these* days. Back in *my* day, you used to have snakes! Okay.

Baby Dot: [babbles]

Travis: Are we ready to do some questions?

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: Okay. But first... thank you note for our sponsor.

Teresa: Aw, fake out.

[theme music plays]

Travis: Hi, everybody. It's me, Travis. I'm here with some thank you notes for our sponsor! First, we wanna say thank you to HoneyBook. You've done it! Your creative passion is now your full time job! How exciting! You did it!

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[theme music plays]

Travis: Okay. This question comes from Lonnie.

"I'm not super big on physical contact with people I'm not close to. I'm shaped like a friend, and I always end up having to dodge hugs. How do I assert my boundaries without coming off as a mean and a party pooper?"

Okay. Here's the thing. Lonnie, I understand the question. It is not mean or a party pooper to state what you need, right?

Teresa: Exactly. "I'm not much of a hugger. It's nothing personal."

Travis: Yeah. "I'm not really comfortable with hugs." The end! Right? Now, if—if you wanna make sure that it doesn't read... however you're worried about it reading—

Baby Dot: [babbling]

Travis: —come up with some playful second half of the decision. Like, what—like, "I—I love secret handshakes," right?

Teresa: Or fist pump. Fist—no, wait.

Travis: Or high five, [crosstalk]—

Teresa: What is that? Fist *bump*.

Travis: Yes. Whatever.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: Right? But I think that "Oh, I'm not really comfortable with hugs." Like, and I think that saying it up front, like, saying it as soon as, like, it is applicable, makes it more comfortable than if you wait til they're, like, *almost* about to hug you, and you're like, "Oh, I'm not really comfortable with hugs!"

Baby Dot: [babbling]

Travis: You just say, like, "Oh, nice to meet you." And if they go for the hug say, like, "Oh, I'm not really comfortable with hugs. But high five!" Right?

Teresa: Right.

Travis: And now it's done.

Teresa: This is where that first step is really important, where you need to make the decision before you get into that situation, right?

Baby Dot: [babbling]

Travis: Yeah. So that way you can, like, have it ready to go. You're not surprised by it, you know? You can say it, like, right out the gate.

Teresa: And you can practice.

Travis: And—but don't feel bad. Don't ever feel bad about stating what you need. Um... uh, Adam asks:

"Is it always appropriate to ask if you can hug someone, or are there moments where you can rely on your intuition and just give someone a hug?"

Teresa: I think that, uh, if they are—you know, if the relationship warrants it, close friends, family—

Travis: Who you—who you have established they *are* comfortable hugging and it's someone who likes hugging you. Like, yeah.

Teresa: Right. If you've hugged them before, um, I can't imagine that it would change drastically—although people do change sometimes. I mean—but someone that you see all the time and hug all the time, no reason to ask every time.

Travis: Yeah. I mean... that's where I think the intuition come—they might not in that moment feel like being hugged, right?

Teresa: It's true. And one would hope that they would say that.

Travis: Yes. Um, I—I think if it's someone you don't know—I mean, I guess if they're walking towards you with their arms out, clearly going for a hug, and you feel like hugging—

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: —yeah.

Teresa: That's one of the signs that they want to hug.

Travis: But I think, um... you know, for me—especially, like I said, with meet and greets and, like, photos and stuff, I just always ask—like, it's a thing that I ask everybody, even if, like, they touch me first or go for the hug for me.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: I still ask, 'cause I don't want them to feel like they're supposed to do that even though they don't want to.

Teresa: That's a big Keanu Reeves internet meme thing, right? Where—

Travis: The hover hand?

Teresa: The hover hand, yeah! So even in pictures where he's clearly nestled quite close to, say, Helen Mirren, uh, he's still not, like, grasping his hand around her.

Travis: Yes. Which... good move, Keanu.

Teresa: Good move.

Travis: Um, Diane asks:

"When is the right time to extract yourself from a hug?"

Whenever you want.

Teresa: [laughs] Well, I think—I think I read somewhere between three seconds and twenty seconds, depending upon how you feel about the hug and the person. So, three seconds is enough.

Travis: Yeah, I generally am—like—hey, listen. I've already established well into this episode, I love hugs. But I see a hug as, "We have hugged. The hug is done." Like, you know what I mean?

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: It's like—

Teresa: "Hug accomplished."

Travis: Right. It's like the longer a hug goes on, it's not more of a hug. [laughs quietly] You know what I mean? It's, like, the hug is done, but—we're done. We hugged!

Teresa: Then it becomes dancing.

Travis: Yes. Agreed. Or... slow wrestling.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: To bring it back to that. That is a good way to end a hug. Just as you're hugging and it's going on too long, slowly start to, like, take them down to the ground.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Like, just—okay. And maybe just put your hip against their hip and try to throw 'em.

Teresa: [laughs] I—

Travis: And you won't have to worry about hugging that person ever again.

Teresa: [laughs] I don't recommend any of that.

Travis: Okay. That's fair. Okay. Um... that's true. Um... oh! Here—we have this question. Safi says:

"How do I tell someone who I've hugged before I'm not comfortable hugging them anymore?"

Teresa: Hmm.

Travis: I—I think that, um... you tell them. Say, like, "Hey. Uh, I—you know, I just don't know that I'm comfortable doing hugs anymore."

Um, now, here's the thing. I am—I am assuming, Safi, that this is your—that this is something different with you, or something you've realized about yourself, and not because you don't want to hug *them*. Um, because I would say if it's, like, a

problem with your relationship has gone bad or you don't like this person anymore, um, then you... don't need to worry about what you tell 'em. Just don't hug them anymore.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Uh, if it's a friend, I think explaining, like, "You know, I—I just kind of realized that I'm not really comfortable with hugs. Um, it has—it's nothin' against you. Uh, it's me. I'm just not really a hugger, it turns out."

Teresa: I think that's fine. Um, I mean, we talk about this all the time. You—you decide how much you want to tell someone, talk to someone, confide in someone, depending upon what your relationship is, right? So a good friend that you no longer want to hug will understand if you don't want to hug them. Um, and then, say—say it's maybe a professional relationship where you hugged because they hugged, and now you feel like they expect a hug every time, and—and you can just say, "No thanks, man." And not hug.

Travis: Um, let's see. Uh, one more, here. This is from Aiden.

"Which is better: one person goes high while the other goes low, or both tilt sideways so one arm is up and one arm is down?"

Teresa: Hmm.

Travis: I think it depends on height, Aiden.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: I think if one person is dramatically higher than the other, you gotta do high and low. If you're about equal, uh, angle arms. Right?

Teresa: You know, thinking about it, I think that when I hug you, I'm always low, right? Because I'm—

Travis: Yeah, well, you're dramatically shorter.

Teresa: —I'm so much shorter.

Travis: Uh—uh, what? Seven inches?

Teresa: Something like that.

Travis: Seven inches shorter than me?

Teresa: I never really thought about it, but I—I guess—

Travis: You wanna start tryin—mixin' it up?

Teresa: No—

Travis: You want to start trying to go high and I'll go low? Or... we'll hug by, like, wrapping our bodies around each other, like I mentioned earlier?

Teresa: I think that you can pick one and pretty much stick with it, right? Because I'm a fairly short person, so I—coming to think about it, I find that I'm almost always low. I'm a low person. Low hugger.

Travis: What I do, um, when I go to hug someone, is I just keep my arms stuck out the whole time.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: I don't wrap, right? And so, like, I'll put my arms—basically just rest my arms on their shoulders, and step backwards.

Teresa: Now, sometimes it's difficult for people to know when—when you're goofin'.

Travis: Well, um... I would—I would never do that, because my, um—my mechanic did build, uh, elbows into my robot arms. [holding back laughter] So I am able to fold my arms, thank goodness.

Teresa: Oh, the—the goofs are strong in this—this one.

Travis: Listen—like I said, I'm a little under the weather and I'm feeling very tired and very loopy. But I'm having a lot of fun, and I'm enjoying recording this episode with you.

Teresa: Aww...

Travis: Um... I just love you very much. Now—

Teresa: I love you too.

Travis: —that's, uh, the questions. But before we wrapped up, you said you wanted to talk a little bit about the international, uh, etiquette of hugging.

Teresa: Yes. Um, so in France, uh, you may be expected to give someone, like, kisses on either cheek, um, instead of a hug, which is still considered too intimate.

Travis: But cheek kiss is totally cool.

Teresa: Cheek kiss is totally cool.

Travis: Huh, interesting.

Teresa: Um, conversely in Canada, even in French speaking Canada, handshake all the way. And if you—if you know someone intimately, you could give them the cheek kisses, but then hugs are still, uh, at least in the business world, frowned upon.

Travis: Mm, yes. Keep those hugs in the bedroom!

Teresa: [laughs] Uh, and in Japan—we've talked about this just a little bit. Um, you would not be expected even to offer a handshake. It's all, um, different levels of bowing, right? Depending upon your respect for the person and their—and the hierarchy between the two of you, and—

Travis: Yeah, you know, the more that we talk about, like, physical contact manners, the more I think that I'm very jealous of, like, the—the—how structured, like, the hierarchy of Japanese bowing is. Of just, like, "Hey. You don't have to worry about any kind of ambiguity anymore, 'cause here is a list of rules that, like, explains how long to shake the hand, right? How many—"

Teresa: Yeah, what the degree of angle is between the two people.

Travis: Right. How to tap the—like, we need more structure in our physical contact greetings here in the US. We need more, like, "Oh, now if they pat your back twice, it means this; and three times means that. And if it's four times, oh no! [through laughter] Something has gone horribly wrong."

Something like that. We need more structure.

Teresa: Yeah. In the UK., handshake really only, none of the kisses or air kisses or any of that kind of stuff. Um, but in Australia, it's kind of like an affront if you don't at least offer a hug.

Travis: Oh, really?

Teresa: Um—well, 'cause, like, one of the image things is that Australians are really, like, laid-back and friendly, right? "G'day, mate?"

Travis: Sure. Yes, I've heard that.

Teresa: Stuff like that. Um, but in—in the U.S., we are trending further and further towards the hug. So I would say, if it is a—a personal meeting, you probably can gauge whether or not the other person wants to hug, but I would steer clear of it in business settings. Handshake is always safe.

Travis: Hey, you know what? In—in this year, uh, 2020, I'm willing to bet that somewhere you can find somebody who makes buttons or pins—

Teresa: Ooh!

Travis: —that says, like, "I don't like hugs," or "I am comfortable hugging," or whatever. Let's just get those just normalized and out there. Maybe we could do some sort of wristband, uh—

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: —coding that says, like, "I'm a handshake person." "I don't like touch at all." "I'm cool with hugs." Whatever. "I only hug my friends."

Teresa: Well, I feel like they have those but, like, for dogs... that are nervous or—

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: —don't approach or—

Travis: I've talked about this before that I want one that indicates that I am not comfortable with small talk, and I do not need it in an interaction with someone. I'm fine with big talk! I want that. I'm cool with that. I would like that to happen.

Let's talk about your hopes and dreams, and you can tell me how you became, you know, a cashier at the grocery store. But I don't need, like, "This weather, huh?"

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: That's—I don't—I never know how to respond to that. "Yeah! Weather. Right. Uh..."

Teresa: This is a real niche market you're—you're catering to.

Travis: Listen—but with the internet... I can—

Teresa: It's true.

Travis: —I can cater to whatever niche market I want. Alright, so that's gonna do it for us. Thank you so much, everyone who has joined us, uh, including Dot. Dot McElroy, joining us once again. Didn't contribute a lot to this episode.

Teresa: Uh, a few noises.

Travis: Yeah. She didn't really bring a lotta goofs or anything. Um, and—

Teresa: She's got time.

Travis: Thank you to everybody who came out for the Cincinnati shows, for *My Brother, My Brother, and Me*.

Teresa: Oh yeah!

Travis: And *The Adventure Zone*. So much fun. Um, speaking of, if you are fans of *My Brother, My Brother, and Me* or *The Adventure Zone*, there are tickets on sale now, uh, for some tours we're doing in Boston and Mashantucket, Connecticut, which I believe I am pronouncing wildly incorrect.

Teresa: [laughs loudly]

Travis: Uh, Norfolk, Virginia and Foxwoods Casino. Uh, we're doing—those are all in April, beginning of April and end of April. If you go to mcelroy.family, you can click on "Tours" and see all those. They're on sale now. Uh, don't wait. The Boston shows—I believe one of them is already sold out, but it's *My Brother, My*

Brother, and Me, with *Sawbones* opening, and *The Adventure Zone*. So go check those out.

Teresa: Oh, so I'm not doing any of those shows.

Travis: I mean, if you want to. We haven't discussed it. We'll figure it out.

Teresa: Hey! If you have topic ideas...

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: You should send them to us, because if I got—if I was inspired by a really great topic, I would—I would insist on performing.

Travis: You know, with Boston and how much history Boston has, I guarantee that there is somebody from Boston that's like—

Teresa: "You should talk about... X."

Travis: Yeah. If you got that, you let us know. Same with, I guess, Mashantucket or Norfolk, Virginia, or, uh, Foxwoods Casino.

Teresa: Or whatever the name—real name of that place is.

Travis: Mashantucket. There's no way that's it! That's fine. Anyways—there's just so many consonants in it! Um... let's see, what else. Go check out all of the other amazing shows on Maximumfun.org.

Speaking of Maximum Fun, the Max Fun Drive is coming up very soon, right at the beginning of March. Uh—or actually—no, I lied. Right in the *middle* of March.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: Uh, and it is your chance, if you love *Shmanners* and other McElroy shows that are on the Maximum Fun Network, you can become a donor and a supporter of our shows, which we thoroughly appreciate.

You can tweet at us @shmannerstcast. Uh, that is also where we put up the episode, uh, topic each week, so that we can pull questions.

Uh, and if you have ideas for topics, we are always excited to get them, shmannerscast@gmail.com. Uh, don't tweet 'em at us. They'll just get lost in the mix. Email shmannerscast@gmail.com.

What else, Teresa?

Teresa: Well, we always thank Brent "brentalfloss" Black for writing our theme music, which is available as a ringtone where those are found. Also, thank you to Kayla M. Wasil for our Twitter thumbnail art, already mentioned that, @shmannerscast.

Also, thank you to Bruja Betty Pinup Photography for our beautiful cover photo of the fan-run Facebook group, *Shmanners* Fanners. Some great stuff comin' through that group. I—I take a peek every once in a while, but it is fan-run, like I said. And if you are looking for, um, other fans who will give and get excellent advice, you should go ahead and join that on Facebook!

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

Teresa: No RSVP required.

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

Teresa: Manners, *Shmanners*! Get it!

[theme music plays]

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