

## Shmanners 132: Confucius

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**Travis:** Teresa, don't give me and the listeners too many facts.

**Teresa:** Why not?

**Travis:** It'll just Confucius!

**Teresa:** 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:** Hey, right off the top.

**Teresa:** Yeah?

**Travis:** Um, I just wanted to say thank you to everybody who came out to our shows—uh, well, did we—uh, what—

**Teresa:** Just the one.

**Travis:** Just the one.

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** No, we did one in Orlando, too. Did we thank people for that?

**Teresa:** Oh, no. I guess we didn't.

**Travis:** So, thank you for the people who came out to Orlando, and thank you for the people who came out to London. And thank you if there was anybody who came to both!

**Travis and Teresa:** Whoaaa!

**Teresa:** Mind blown.

**Travis:** Hope you had a great time. We also had a great time in Dublin. Didn't do a show there, but we just hung out. It was absolutely lovely. Um, but now we're back stateside...

**Teresa:** And this weather, huh?

**Travis:** Uh— hmm?

**Teresa:** Not as good as when— [British accent] across the pond.

**Travis:** You know, there are people who would disagree with you. Those people would be wrong, of course—

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** —because it was, like, a little cold and a little rainy and very grey over in London and Dublin.

**Teresa:** It was like a beautiful fall, all the time.

**Travis:** I loved it so much. It was. It was, like, a hint of fall—

**Teresa:** And we got back here, and it's all hot... and stuff.

**Travis:** I don't care for it.

**Teresa:** I don't care for it!

**Travis:** Aw, man, I'm lookin' forward to fall.

**Teresa:** It's gonna be great.

**Travis:** And so, um, in honor of fall—

**Teresa:** Sweater weather.

**Travis:** —we're going to do a special episode about Confucius.

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** I don't know what the tie-in is there, but I honestly don't anything about Confucius.

**Teresa:** There's no tie-in. It's okay.

**Travis:** Okay. Cool. The only thing I know about Confucius is that— and I hope that this joke is dying out— but for a long time, like, the— the joke was, like— especially if you had a character who you were making very stereotypically Asian— they would say something like, "Confucius say," and then something that obviously Confucius never said.

**Teresa:** Right.

**Travis:** That— you know, like some kind of pun or joke or something. That's... all I know.

**Teresa:** I haven't— I have not heard of that joke in a very long time, but I do know the joke you're talking about.

**Travis:** I hope it's dying out, because it's, uh, so incredibly offensive on a lot of levels?

**Teresa:** Yeah.

**Travis:** One, um, offensive to— I don't— everyone? Like, it's—

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** Ugh.

**Teresa:** Well, so, here's the thing. Confucius said a lot of things, and quotes are inappropriately tied to him constantly.

**Travis:** But I'm pretty sure if— when I was, like, seven or eight, just based on, like, cartoons and old comic books and stuff, if you had asked me who Confu— I wouldn't have believed that it was a real person. Like, that it was, like—

**Teresa:** You just thought it was the butt of a joke.

**Travis:** Well, the same as if you said, like, "What does Popeye say?" You know? That I just thought, like, Confucius was some kind of made-up character that was there to make jokes about things he had said. You know?

**Teresa:** Oh. Well, no.

**Travis:** No. I mean—

**Teresa:** No.

**Travis:** I know that now! I'm not a child anymore. I've put away such childish things.

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** I have a house and a baby and a car now. I'm an adult.

**Teresa:** Okay.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** You keep tellin' yourself that.

**Travis:** Ohhhh!

**Teresa:** Ohhhh! Alright. So, Confucianism. Um, when I first thought of this topic I kind of wavered back and forth, because I wasn't sure if— if this would be more a religious topic or a social topic. And, um, overwhelmingly from my research it is categorized as a system of social and ethical philosophy, instead of a religion.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** Um, because it is possible for one to follow Confucianism and be Buddhist.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** Um, and be Christian, or any of these other things, because he is not regarded so much as a religious prophet, but more as... like a Benjamin Franklin, who just had a lot of— who had a lot of great things to say, made a lot of sense. You know what I mean?

**Travis:** So, this is— and I don't mean to downplay Confucius— but this is like if you said, um, "I'm— I don't know, Southern Baptist, and also I try to live my life like Dale Carnegie wrote in his books." You know?

**Teresa:** Sure, yeah.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** Kinda like that. So, um, it... it might be a little more confusing than that, okay?

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** Just— just a little bit. Because, um, in the time of Confucius— who was a real person, let me reiterate that—

**Travis:** Yes, I know that now.

**Teresa:** Yes. [laughs] There was no such thing as the separation, obviously, between church and state, because emperors were considered emperor gods, um, and, like... the priests that they used and had were not, like— it wasn't their job, because they were also parents and teachers and officials and, like— you know what I mean? Where it's just like a very woven together social fabric?

**Travis:** Yes.

**Teresa:** Okay, great. Um, so about the man himself. His name was actually Master Kong, okay?

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** His name was not Confucist— Confucius. Uh, that was given to him as kind of, like...

**Travis:** Like a title, almost?

**Teresa:** No... so, you know how, like, the word "avocado" is kind of like an Englishization of the word "ahuacatl?" Have you heard about this?

**Travis:** No, but okay!

**Teresa:** Okay. So, the original name... has a sound. And then in English, we kinda just morph that sound together. So instead of ahuacatl— ahuacatl, there it is— you change it to avocado. Right?

**Travis:** So, sort of like we say aluminum, and they say aluminium.

**Teresa:** Nnnno.

**Travis:** No, okay!

**Teresa:** No. It's— okay, okay, here's another example. [French accent] *Croissant*, French, right?

**Travis:** Uh-huh.

**Teresa:** But if you went into a Starbucks and said, "May I have a [French accent] *croissant*?" The barista would be like, "What?" So, you say "croissant," in English.

**Travis:** But how to we get from Master Kong to Confucius?

**Teresa:** Well, okay. So, Kong, um, is... the last name. So, the last name comes first in ancient Chinese. So, Kong is his last name, and then his first name sounds like Fucius. Kong Fucius. Confucius.

**Travis:** Okay. So— but when we say Confucius, we are calling him by the wrong name.

**Teresa:** We are calling him by—

**Travis:** Like if someone called me Tarvis Miguelroy.

**Teresa:** No—

**Travis:** And I'd be like, "Well, I mean, that's close."

**Teresa:** Well, it's like— it's exactly like croissant. It is the thing. The English say croissant.

**Travis:** Uh-huh. Ohh—

**Teresa:** Even though in French it's [French accent] *croissant*.

**Travis:** This is like— I think we've talked about this on *My Brother, My Brother, and Me* before, honestly, but the idea of, like, Germany isn't called Germany, but we call it Germany. Like, the fact that... we have English words for countries and proper nouns that we call them rather than the— you know what I mean? Like, it's—

**Teresa:** Yes, okay.

**Travis:** It's weird that we have English translation for proper nouns, but this is an English translation of this person's name.

**Teresa:** Yes.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** Yes. Okay. Um, and he lived from 551 to 479 BCE.

**Travis:** I can't do the math.

**Teresa:** No, I can't either. Um, but again, this wasn't, like, a religion that he was founding. He wanted to kind of revive the social aspect of the— of some unnamed religion from the Zhou dynasty.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** Um, and this was because— it was a very tumultuous time, and this kind of, you know, injustice that was happening was things like people saying, "Why can't the gods prevent social upheavals? Why can't they prevent, um, a— an emperor from being corrupt? Why—" like, all this kind of stuff.

Um, and so, what is the basis for social order? Is kind of the heart of what Confucianism is.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** And so, um— so he wrote down almost kind of like— I wouldn't say parables, but they were stories relating to all of these kind of things, where he talked a lot about the gentleman, right? Which is this— this good that you're supposed to, uh, aspire to, and the small man, which is the bad. Right?

**Travis:** I'm trying to remember what it is, because I know that in Zen there's a similar thing, where it's not— they're called—[groans] it's gonna bother me if I don't think about now. It's, uh— so, Zen koan, K-O-A-N. And it's like, um... you know, one paragraph kind of, like, puzzle stories? Of, like, think on this, think about this.

**Teresa:** Sure, sure.

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Teresa:** But what— so what happened with these, these books of what Confucius would talk about is his followers, his... I hesitate to say disciples, but more like his—

**Travis:** Students?

**Teresa:** Sure. His students. His devoted students.

**Travis:** Uh-huh.

**Teresa:** Um, wrote down what he would kind of say in answers to their questions.



**Travis:** So, like... Confucius was just, like, spinnin' this off his dome? This wasn't— he didn't, like, sit down to write these things, somebody would just be like, "What does it mean to be nice to somebody?" And he'd be like, "Well... " and then he would just, like, lay down some really genius answer?

**Teresa:** That is how the writings are presented.

**Travis:** Whoaaa! Alright.

**Teresa:** So, it's almost like notes that the disciples took. You know what I mean?

**Travis:** Mm-hmm.

**Teresa:** Um, and it actually wasn't something that was extremely popular in the day, even though, like I said, he did have kind of devoted students. Um, because one of the things that he would talk about is this kind of... uh, conflict?

**Travis:** Mm-hmm.

**Teresa:** Between maintaining the status quo on the outside and achieving kind of the perfectness of the inside, and when those things don't match up, how you have to compensate, right?

**Travis:** Uh-huh.

**Teresa:** And this wasn't something that the Chinese Emperor state was really, like, into, because they pretty much just wanted you to do what you were supposed to do. Right?

**Travis:** Gotcha. And you know what? It also doesn't surprise me that it didn't achieve huge popularity at the time, because I think with philosophy versus religion, a lot of times— and this isn't an attack on religion whatsoever— but religion tends to promise something, usually salvation or some kind of, like—

**Teresa:** Enlightenment or something.

**Travis:** Yeah, or a reward of some kind, whereas philosophies about, like, social ethics are usually just like, "And this is the right thing to do."

And you're like, "Yeah, but what do I *get*?"

"No, no, it's just—this is the right way to behave."

"Yeah, but, like... what do I *get*?"

**Teresa:** So, this process is described in The Great Learning, which is a section of these classic rituals that he's written, or was written about him.

"Only when things are investigated is knowledge extended. Only when knowledge is extended are thoughts sincere. Only when thoughts are sincere are minds rectified. Only when minds are rectified are the characters of persons cultivated. Only when character is cultivated are our families regulated. Only when families are regulated are states well-governed. Only when states are well-governed is there peace in the world."

**Travis:** Well, I see very much where ruling people would be like, "Uh, I don't like that!"

**Teresa:** "Uhhh, I don't like that very much... "

**Travis:** "I don't, mmm... no, just— we're doin' great! Don't worry about us."

**Teresa:** Yeah. Um, so it was kind of this cyclical nature, right? So, like, things are good with your mind and your family and your home and your community and your state and your government. Like, it's just... you know what I mean?

**Travis:** Well, that everything is connected to each other, and it's— I mean, to simplify this, it kind of sounds like if something is wrong, it's not just one thing, it's that all of these things are connected, and—

**Teresa:** Yeah. So, really, uh, it only became big way after he died. So, um—

**Travis:** What, he died?

**Teresa:** Yeah, sorry.

**Travis:** You can't just spring that on me, Teresa! [pauses] You didn't even, like, give it a soft lead up!

**Teresa:** Well—[laughs]

**Travis:** Oh my gosh...

**Teresa:** Uh... under Emperor, um, Han Emperor Wu, which was during 140 to 87 BCE, um, did they— did people start to accept Confucianism as, like, state ideology.

**Travis:** Oh, wow.

**Teresa:** You know what I mean?

**Travis:** Mm-hmm.

**Teresa:** And, like I said, you could still be whatever religion, but these were just kind of like the social business.

**Travis:** I see.

**Teresa:** Yeah. Um, so here's the thing. Here's how it relates... to manners.  
[laughs]

**Travis:** Okay!

**Teresa:** [laughs] How far are we in? Like, I'm sorry I took so long.

**Travis:** Six hours.

**Teresa:** Yep. Um, along with all of these kind of questions about what is love, what is happiness, how do I treat people? All this kind of stuff. In there are all these tiny little nuggets, right, about character building, and about treating each other— um, he doesn't say "Treat people how you want to be treated." It's the— the negative of that. Do not do to people what you wouldn't have done to you.

**Travis:** Yeah, more of a "Don't."

**Teresa:** Yeah, more of a "Don't." We like to speak in "Do's," though.

**Travis:** Well... you say that, but then we had a two-year-old, and...

**Teresa:** [laughs] Yeah. Um, but these are developed through ritual, and I think this is how it really relates to manners and etiquette in our day, because we have so many of these little social rituals that we go through, day in and day out. Like, "Oh, hello. How are you?" [pauses] And you say...

**Travis:** "I am fine. How are you?"

**Teresa:** And I say, "I'm doin' great! Have a nice day."

**Travis:** And I say, [sing-song] "Okay, bye!"

**Teresa:** Yeah, something like that. Right?

**Travis:** And I say, [sing-song] "Oh my God, you're on fire!"

**Teresa:** No...

**Travis:** Well...

**Teresa:** So these are— these are the things that he— that was described in his book in kind of, like, this search for continual perfection. You know what I mean?

**Travis:** Well, and not only that, but I— I love about this, and it's something that has kind of been occurring to me over time as we've looked at historical manners and etiquette and that kind of thing, is that it used to be a thing that not only did people think about all the time, that they, like, actively practiced. That they, like— when you were in school, like, you would go to school and be taught, like, place settings and stuff, if you were in the type of class that needed to know that kind of thing.

And it's not something that we actively think about as much anymore, and then we are, like, confused when it doesn't just come to us in the moment.

**Teresa:** Right.

**Travis:** Like, "I didn't know how to deal with this situation!" It's like, yeah, of course you didn't. You haven't practiced it.

**Teresa:** Mm-hmm.

**Travis:** And what Confucianism reminds me a lot of Zen in the same of, like, it's a practice. It's a thing you think about all the time.

**Teresa:** Yeah. It's not just going through the motions, but it's the idea that, um, you give your full attention to these relationships that you cultivate. Parent, child, um, spouse, teacher, all of those things, your full attention.

**Travis:** And, like, anything, be it sports or music or theater or anything, cooking, you practice it, so that when the situation arises when you need it, you don't have to think about it or choose what to do. You have already, like, thought about it and what happens in the moment is much more instinctual. You know what I mean? Like, that's the thing, is I started doing Zen, and I hate to keep comparing the two, 'cause I have no idea how they compare, but when I started doing Zen I did 'cause I was like, "Oh, I get frustrated and I get, you know, worried, and I wanna be able to let go of that."

And I thought it was going to teach me, like, tips and tricks on how to deal with that stuff?

**Teresa:** Mm-hmm. [laughs]

**Travis:** But it was rather like, no, by thinking about it all the time and, like, practicing and doing the work, it has made the kind of base level a lot easier to deal with. You know what I mean? Rather than, like, "Oh, it's a breathing technique!" No.

This is like, "Okay, I— I am prepared for this moment." And it sounds to me a lot like that's what Confucianism is, like, when you have teaching, that means you have studying. And you study so that you know what to do.

**Teresa:** Right. Um, not to say that this kind of, like... practice didn't extend to even the mundane, right? Because there were, uh, Confucius-outlined rules for eating according to ancient ritual, um, and it was just this kind of— this mindfulness, again, that you were talking about, yeah.

**Travis:** Well, um, I would like to get to some of those teachings. But before we do, I'd like to say a thank you note to our sponsors!

[theme music plays]

**Travis:** Alright! We have some thank you notes this week, but also, uh, we have been joined by our cat?

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** So, if you hear something rubbing against the microphone, it's either my beard or it's Willow. It's one of those two! Maybe both. Um—

**Teresa:** She— she needed some attention.

**Travis:** I guess! She's been outside the door, crying! A little behind the scenes. Alright, first, first thank you note, to Sun Basket.

It's a well-known fact that here in the McElroy house, and I believe in all McElroy houses across the world—

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** —that we are fans of the meal subscription box, and one of our favorites is Sun Basket. Here's what I love. Sun Basket, one, it's simple... and it's good.

**Teresa:** Oh! That's two.

**Travis:** That's two— oh, you're right. But here's the thing: it ends up with this, like, super fresh, really— this isn't a flavor, but the only word that pops to mind is bright? Like a bright flavor, you know?

**Teresa:** Okay, sure!

**Travis:** Um, and it's easy, it's convenient, and it's delicious.

**Teresa:** I really love that the packaging is so simple.

**Travis:** Yes.

**Teresa:** And, like, recyclable.

**Travis:** Yes.

**Teresa:** Which is great. Um, I love how all of the ingredients are bagged up together.

**Travis:** Yeah!

**Teresa:** And so you don't have to, like, hunt through your drawer for, you know... I don't know, garlic or scallions or whatever. You know what I mean?

**Travis:** And a lot of the meals are, like, 15 to 30 minutes of prep. You know what I mean? And then they're done. It's incredible. And it ships right to you. You don't have to go to the store. And it comes with responsibly raised meats and seafood, directly to your door! And you can pick from, get this, 18 weekly recipes, with options for paleo, gluten-free, lean and clean, vegan, diabetes friendly, and more!

**Teresa:** Ooh!

**Travis:** So, get \$35 off your first order at [sunbasket.com/shmanners](https://sunbasket.com/shmanners). That's [sunbasket.com/shmanners](https://sunbasket.com/shmanners) for \$35 off. [Sunbasket.com/shmanners](https://sunbasket.com/shmanners).

We also want to talk about Trinova.

**Teresa:** Yeah! So, um, they sent me some products, and let me tell you about them. They are specialized cleaning products for things around your home, and in your... auto.

**Travis:** Your automobile?

**Teresa:** Automobile.

**Travis:** Your automocar?

**Teresa:** And according to some of the stuff they sent me, some of it is derived from natural materials, where it's non-toxic, and some of it isn't, so you do need to make sure that you read your labels carefully. Um, but let me tell you... [laughs] their, like, general cleaning cleaner is non-toxic, so it's safe around kids and pets—

**Travis:** And it smells great.

**Teresa:** [whispers] It does! [normal volume] I love the way it smells. It smells like—

**Travis:** Smells so good.

**Teresa:** —an expensive hotel.

**Travis:** Yes! And I also find their glass cleaner to be very effective—

**Teresa:** Yes!

**Travis:** —which is great, because little fingers make lots of smudges!

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** Not just little fingers, but also little animal noses on windows, and—

**Teresa:** Yeah, on windows.

**Travis:** Ugh. And we have these lights that are right above our stove top, and so you get, like, some grease on it and stuff, they do great.

**Teresa:** So easy, made it super, super easy. They even include with some of their products microfiber cloths that really work very well with their products. Um, and it seems that they have something for everything. There's the glass cleaner, there's the multi-surface, there's the— there's, like, a special wind— like, um— what is that? Uh, shower door protector. There's stainless steel options—

**Travis:** Coffee maker cleaner.

**Teresa:** Coffee maker cleaner. If you need to clean it, they have something for it, and they're great products. They're very easy to use. Um, and like I said, the multi-surface smells amazing.

**Travis:** Um, and you can visit our custom landing page at [goTrinova.com/shmanners](http://goTrinova.com/shmanners). That's G-O-T-R-I-N-O-V-A.com/shmanners, and use the promo code "manner20" to get 20% off their first Trinova products. That's manner, M-A-N-N-E-R-2-0, and you can get 20% off your first Trinova products!

We are also sponsored this week by ModCloth. Um, it's the fun, friendly spot for style that's as expressive and unique as you.



**Teresa:** And I just checked out their autumn lines, which are so, so cute. It's a— it's got a really stylish spin on the season classics like blazers and jumpers and lots of plaid.

**Travis:** Mm-hmm.

**Teresa:** I know you love the plaid.

**Travis:** I do enjoy the plaid.

**Teresa:** And they have all of these looks in a variety of sizes, um, ranging from extra, extra small to 4X. One of the things I really like about ModCloth is I have a specific style...

**Travis:** [laughs] I have a specific set of skills.

**Teresa:** And, um, one of the drop-down tab menus for— I really like to buy dresses from ModCloth, I'm not gonna lie— they have a specific vintage-inspired filter?

**Travis:** Oh, that's right up your alley!

**Teresa:** Which shows everything I love, all on one page. Um, and by vintage, they mean, like, all the way from the 30's to the 80's. It's all there.

**Travis:** And right now, you can get 15% off your purchase of \$100 or more by going to [M-O-D-C-L-O-T-H.com](http://M-O-D-C-L-O-T-H.com) and enter code "shmanners" at checkout. Hurry! This offer expires on December 8th, 2018. That's [modcloth.com](http://modcloth.com), and use the code "shmanners" at checkout.

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**Biz:** Hi. I'm Biz.

**Theresa:** And I'm Theresa.

**Biz:** And we host *One Bad Mother*, a comedy podcast about parenting.

**Theresa:** Whether you are a parent, or just know kids exist in the world, join us each week as we honestly share what it's like to be a parent.

I... don't know how to fix mornings for myself.

**Biz:** [laughs]

**Theresa:** I do not know how to make mornings okay for myself.

**Biz:** So the t-shirt "I don't do mornings—"

**Theresa:** Yes.

**Biz:** —isn't even a funny shirt.

**Theresa:** No.

**Biz:** I shouldn't get it for you.

**Theresa:** It's sad.

**Biz:** It's a sad shirt.

**Theresa:** Yeah. It's a sad shirt with tears flowing.

**Biz:** So, join us each week, as we judge less, laugh more, and remind you that you are doing a great job.

**Theresa:** Find us on [maximumfun.org](http://maximumfun.org), on Apple podcasts, or wherever you get your podcasts!

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[dramatic sound effect]

**Voiceover:** [movie trailer voice] In a world dominated by dudebro movie podcasts...

[dramatic sound effect]

A world where Casey Affleck has an Oscar... and Angela Basset... does not.

[dramatic sound effect]

Only one podcast is brave enough to call bull-[censor beep]. *Who Shot Ya?*

[music plays]

With: Ricky Carmona.

**Ricky:** A lot of people don't know. Porgs? Puerto Rican.

**Voiceover:** Alonso Duralde.

**Alonso:** I would eat Okja.

**April:** [gasps]

**Voiceover:** April Wolf.

**April:** I wanna interrupt and say that the fish man was real sexy.

**Voiceover:** Drea Clark.

**Drea:** I have a real soft spot for King Kong.

**Voiceover:** And women of color.

**Speaker One:** I was like, "Damn!"

**Speaker Two:** Ryan Coogler got final cut!

**Speaker One:** Coogler got final cut?!

**Speaker Three:** I just felt like the film was both sour, and so completely... irrelevant, to basically anything in life?

**Voiceover:** *Who Shot Ya?* Listen every Friday on Maximum Fun, or wherever you get your podcasts.

[music plays]

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**Travis:** Okay. So, tell me some sayings— wait. Before you do...

**Teresa:** Oh.

**Travis:** This is one of those things, as you said, uh, we had to actually— get this, folks— read books.

**Teresa:** Ahh, yeah.

**Travis:** Because it's— it's hard, as you pointed out earlier in the episode— misattributed quotes— it's wild. It's wild.

**Teresa:** Rampant.

**Travis:** Yes.

**Teresa:** Everywhere. Um, if you thought that a lot of stuff attributed to Benjamin Franklin was wrong on the internet, multiply that times 100 for Confucius.

**Travis:** So, what are some actual, like, Confucius sayings? Confucianisms? Is that a thing?

**Teresa:** Hmm... sure.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** Uh, so like I told you about, the idea of the gentleman, right? Who is usually the do-gooder. And then—

**Travis:** So, the gentleman is like the Gallant of the Goofus and Gallant.

**Teresa:** Yeah! Of the Goofus and Gallant. And then the small man...

**Travis:** Is the Goofus.

**Teresa:** Is the Goofus.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** Um, so here's one.

"Right is the stuff of which a gentleman is made. Done with courtesy, spoken with humility, rounded with truth; right makes a gentleman."

**Travis:** Okay. Cool.

**Teresa:** I think that's— that's really cool. Right?

**Travis:** Well— okay. What I don't wanna— I don't wanna give off the same vibe that I did a little bit during the Benjamin Franklin episode. Because the thing about really wise teaching is that you want them to be... what I think students seek out is they want it to be something like, "Oh my God, I never would have thought of that!"

**Teresa:** Sure.

**Travis:** But that's not it. 'Cause, like, if I say 2 plus 2 equals 4, and you're like, "Yeah?" Like, well, I know you know it, but, like... this isn't about knowing it, it's about learning it, and there's a difference between knowing something and having it, like, ingrained in you?

**Teresa:** Yes.

**Travis:** So, read it for me one more time.

**Teresa:** "Right is the stuff of which a gentleman is made. Done with courtesy, spoken with humility, rounded with truth, right makes a gentleman."

**Travis:** There we go. Okay. Now, hit me... with another bit of fried gold.

**Teresa:** [laughs] Here are— here are three little nuggets.

**Travis:** Okay. Give me some juicy nuggets.

**Teresa:** "Hold faithfulness and sincerity as first principles."

**Travis:** Yeah!

**Teresa:** "Have no friends not equal to yourself."

**Travis:** Huh.

**Teresa:** "When you have faults, do not fear to abandon them."

**Travis:** Okay. Let's talk about those individually, 'cause the first one... give me that first one again.

**Teresa:** "Hold faithfulness and sincerity as first principles."

**Travis:** Okay. That's great, right? 'Cause that's—

**Teresa:** That makes total sense.

**Travis:** —way better than, like... to be entertaining or cool or whatever. Cool.

**Teresa:** Cool.

**Travis:** The second one...

**Teresa:** "Have no friends not equal to yourself." I think— I think what this means is, um, a rising tide raises all boats type idea?

**Travis:** Uh-huh.

**Teresa:** Where you want to try and— like, we're seeking this, quote, "perfection," right? In this ideal.

**Travis:** Right.

**Teresa:** So, if you have friends who are equal to yourself, you're not really striving for anything in your life. I don't think it's about the negative, where, like, "Don't hang out with bad people" Or maybe...

**Travis:** 'Cause that's what it sounds like.

**Teresa:** Maybe it is a little bit. But I think it means—

**Travis:** 'Cause there's a part of that, though—

**Teresa:** —hang out with people who you admire and aspire to be like. And, like I said, a rising tide raises all boats.

**Travis:** That's the thing is, like, we talked about the difference between a "Do" saying or a "Don't" saying, right?

**Teresa:** Mm-hmm.

**Travis:** And, like, I think this is a "Don't" saying. Where you would say, like, "Hang out with people who make you wanna be better," right? I think what Confucius is saying is, like, "Don't hang out with people who make you worse." And, like, I'll say, Confucius—

**Teresa:** Okay!

**Travis:** Yeah, right? 'Cause the first time I heard it I thought about it like it was a status thing or something along those lines. But I think if these are in terms of being your best self, really does kinda strike me, like, if you've got some friends who are like, "They're kinda jerks, but I like 'em." Like, well... find some people who aren't jerks that you like, then!

**Teresa:** Yeah.

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Teresa:** Yeah. And then the last one:

“When you have faults, do not fear to abandon them.”

I think this really speaks to people, like, get into habits of things that seem to be working, but they're not bettering them. You know what I mean?

**Travis:** Well, I think more than that, what this struck me as is that sometimes people have a fault and they get it in their head that that's just part of their character, and there's— like, "I'm a messy person." And it's like, "You can— you can work on not being me—" like, it is not— it's not like being right-handed or near-sighted.

Like, if you are a messy person— or, like, "I'm someone who's always late!" Like, you don't have to be. You don't have to be someone who's always late. Stop being late for things! You know what I mean? Like, don't start— don't treat your faults as though they were somehow inherent to your being.

**Teresa:** Yeah. Oh, and I found it! I found it—

**Travis:** Man, I should write one of these books! I can do this, too!

**Teresa:** Remember the discussion earlier about his name?

**Travis:** Yes.

**Teresa:** I knew I had it in my notes. Here it is. Here it is. Kong Fuzi.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** Kong Fuzi. Fuz— Fuzi. There it is. Kong Fuzi.

**Travis:** See, I wasn't even gonna try to pronounce it, because I thought that that would just prove the point of why we say Confucius.

**Teresa:** I mean... sure? But that's— it's exactly what I was talking about, where said in the native tongue, it is— it is a name, right? But then people who hear it have taken that name and changed it into something that they can say.

**Travis:** Sure.



**Teresa:** Yeah.

**Travis:** I mean, I get that.

**Teresa:** Okay. Sorry, sorry, sorry. Um—[laughs] I realize that talking about Confucianism, I haven't really told you much about his person.

**Travis:** Uh-huh?

**Teresa:** Do you wanna know just a little bit?

**Travis:** Sure!

**Teresa:** Oh— okay, sorry.

**Travis:** How tall was he?

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** 6'9".

**Teresa:** Uh—

**Travis:** He was not only a great teacher, but also a star forward.

**Teresa:** Um— so, his father was a well-respected soldier, and was a governor of his province. Um, but wasn't super wealthy. Confucius married at 19, and held office early on as well. And from that, he became a schoolteacher, and this is where he started developing his, you know, devoted student following.

Um, he was invited to the court, and then something happened to his wife, his wife died.

**Travis:** I was about to ask, what? But I also then remembered that this is 2500 years ago, so I don't think history should be faulted here if we can't remember exactly what happened. But something happened to his wife and she died.

**Teresa:** And she died. Um, and so he had to go into mourning, and according to the, you know, the time, after mourning you can't take public office again. Um,

and so he ended up working for— as an assistant superintendent of works to the ruler of Lu.

Um, and... [sighs] see, the thing is, he lost the support of this ruler, because of the things that he believed as far as, like—

**Travis:** His teachings, yeah-yeah-yeah.

**Teresa:** Yeah, the teachings. And so, he kind of just, like, wandered from state to state, like, with his followers. Sometimes being treated well, sometimes not. Um, and then he died.

**Travis:** What?!

**Teresa:** Yeah. But not before his followers wrote down all his stuff. There's a big ol' book about it.

**Travis:** Okay. Well, everybody go read that book.

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** Um, that's gonna do it for us this week. I hope you enjoyed this little bio episode. If you have ideas for future episodes or topics you want to hear about or just, like, people's lives, especially— here's the thing. If you know about somebody who you're like, "They should do an episode on this, because no one knows about this person, and they should," I would love to do some episodes like that.

**Teresa:** I'm into that.

**Travis:** So, if you have ideas for bio episodes for, like, lost etiquette, manners stars, let us know.

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** Um... let's see. Uh, we have manner— uh, *Shmanners* merch!

**Teresa:** Woo hoo!

**Travis:** Up on— up on the DFTBA site. If you go to—

**Teresa:** It is so cute, too.

**Travis:** It is so cute, by Kate Leth. If you go to [mcelroymerch.com](http://mcelroymerch.com), you can find a "Hello dear," "Hello, my dove," uh, t-shirt and pin set, and they're super cute. It's got a deer and a dove on there. It's adorable.

**Teresa:** Adorable.

**Travis:** Um, we are going to be at New York Comic Con.

**Teresa:** Woo!

**Travis:** October 6th. Um, we're doing a show. It's me and Teresa. We're gonna do some *Shmammers*. Um, and then we're also— let's see. Who all's there? I'm actually gonna pull up the list, 'cause I don't wanna miss anybody.

I can say, Jean Grey, Quelle Chris, uh, Lucky Yates, uh... Paul and Storm, Janet Varney, Ben Blacker, Holly Conrad, Jonathan Colton, The Double Clicks, Brent Black, Sammus the Rapper, Courtney Enlow, Pat Rothfuss, Miles Luna, Amy Dallen, Clint McElroy, Jamie Cordero, and me and Teresa. It's going to be, I'm gonna say, a heck of a show.

**Teresa:** It's gonna be a banger.

**Travis:** Um, there's gonna be music, there's gonna be comedy, there's gonna be bits, and... tricks? I don't know. Maybe. Who knows?

**Teresa:** [laughs] And chats.

**Travis:** And it's gonna be fun! So, you can get your tickets at [bit.ly/mcelroyNYCC](http://bit.ly/mcelroyNYCC). Now, here's the thing. It is part of New York Comic Con, but A, you don't need a badge to get a ticket, but you do need a ticket.

**Teresa:** Right.

**Travis:** That's B. Tickets are not included with your badge. So, go to [bit.ly/mcelroyNYCC](http://bit.ly/mcelroyNYCC), and we will see you 7:30 on October 6th. Um, go check out all the other amazing McElroy shows, and all the other amazing McElroy— mm— well, McElroy Max Fun shows—

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** —but also, there are Max Fun shows that McElroys are *not* on that you can find at—

**Teresa:** Those are also good.

**Travis:** Yes. You can find them at Maximumfun.org. What else, Teresa?

**Teresa:** Well, we always do our thank yous for Brent "brentalfloss" Black, the writer of our theme music. That is available as a ringtone where those are found.

Thank you to Kayla M. Wasil for our Twitter thumbnail art. Um, thank you to Keely Weis Photography for our banner for the fan-run Facebook group, *Shmanners* Fanners. Please go join that group. Lots of great people giving lots of good advice.

**Travis:** And that's gonna do it for us. 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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