

Shmanners 265: Jewelry

Published on June 4th, 2021
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Travis: Do you know what I like about the phrase "wedding bands?"

Teresa: What?

Travis: It has a nice ring to it!

Teresa: Ah! It's *Shmanners*!

[theme song 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 really enjoyed that classic goof-em-up.

Travis: Thank you! It came to me in the moment and it was perfect.

Teresa: Loved it.

Travis: Sometimes the key to writing a joke is to think, "What's a funny word I can put in the punch line?" And work backwards from there.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: So I was like, "Oh, we're talking about jewelry. Ring. Ring means a bunch of different things. Okay, great. Go backwards from there."

Teresa: I didn't need a lesson or a TED Talk, I'm just saying it was good.

Travis: Okay, well, I'm used to teaching Bebe about jokes, so...

Teresa: [bursts out laughing]

Travis: Sorry! Sorry— Sometimes I forget not to talk to adults like kids and, you know, I've been taking this blacksmithing class and, like, someone will start to reach for something like, "Now, that's hot!" And I'm like, "Oh no!"

Teresa: Oh no! [laughs]

Travis: "I'm so sorry, you're a grown up and—I know, I'm so—oh, God. I apologize." Or I'll look at someone and go, "Do you need to go to the potty?"

Teresa: No, you do not!

Travis: Oh, no, no. Mostly just you.

Teresa: Yeah, me.

Travis: So we're talking about jewels—

Teresa: Because the answer is yes, I need lots of potty breaks.

Travis: Almost always, right? We're—that's the thing, man. Sometimes Bebe can go a while.

Teresa: Yeah, all day!

Travis: And like, here I am, like, "Oh, has it been ten minutes?" Okay. So we're talking about jewelry.

Teresa: We are! This was suggested by Robin. They had a few specific questions about birthstones and necklace shapes, which we will definitely get to.

Travis: Have we not done—I guess we did anniversary presents.

Teresa: Yeah, which some gemstones are in there, as well. Like the diamond anniversary.

Travis: Oh, yeah. I'm gonna talk about diamonds.

Teresa: Oh, boy.

Travis: Folks, I'm gonna talk about diamonds.

Teresa: Ohh, boy.

Travis: But here's the thing, jewelry is... one, falls very much into, I would say, our accessories category.

Teresa: Indeed.

Travis: We did perfume last week, which I also included in there. And jewelry once again strikes a very interesting thing to me because one, I'm amazed we haven't talked about it before.

Teresa: I know, right?

Travis: And two, it can mean so much, right?

Teresa: Absolutely.

Travis: Not only is it a style thing, not only is it a personality thing. But there's a whole, like, symbolism across a lot of different things. Not just, like, the symbols one might wear on a necklace or something...

Teresa: Sure.

Travis: ... but where you wear your ring, how you, you know, wear your watch. All these things.

Teresa: Absolutely. Um, so here's some history. The first thing being, some historians believe that body adornments, is what we're relating to jewelry, pre-dated the invention of the plow.

Travis: You know what? That makes complete sense to me and you know why it makes complete sense to me?

Teresa: What?

Travis: Guess? Religious regions.

Teresa: Certainly.

Travis: Or not just religious, but ceremonial reasons.

Teresa: Ceremonial, status, definitely. So different archeological sites have uncovered jewelry made of feathers, bones, shells, colored pebbles, that were fashioned into all sorts of things. And people wore it for a lot of different reasons. Like you said, love, or religion, or expression, or acceptance, or a status symbol, all that stuff.

Travis: Maybe it is just because we just covered it last week, but I'm finding a hard time not drawing parallels between perfume and jewelry already.

Because we talked about last week of perfume makes complete sense to me, where someone would be like, "This flower smells good! I'm gonna rub it on myself!" Right? Where this would be like—

Teresa: "This is pretty! Gonna wear it."

Travis: Right? Like, this is pretty. Why put it in my pocket where no one can see it? Why bury it in a hole where no one can see it? I'm gonna put it in my hair. I'm gonna wear it around my neck. I'm gonna put it on my wrist. You know, like, I get it. Yeah.

Teresa: Yeah. There was a necklace made of fish bones found in Monaco and turned out to be 25 thousand years old.

Travis: Wow!

Teresa: I can't—it's hard for me to think about time like that.

Travis: Yeah, no def. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Teresa: [simultaneously] That's very old!

Travis: It's very old. You heard it here first, folks. Very old.

Teresa: Very old. The meaning of the necklace is still under debate. Some assume that it was the sign of the chief of a village, or a shaman, or could have been gifted to a woman who bore a son as a trophy to her fertility.

Travis: Or amazing fisherperson.

Teresa: Sure!

Travis: Might just be like, world's best fisher.

Teresa: Yeah, yeah. Because the first adornments seem to be artifacts from the hunt.

Travis: Mm-hmm. Yeah.

Teresa: Teeth, claws, horns, bones...

Travis: Trophies.

Teresa: Exactly, trophies. And, you know, wearing these trophies might bring you good luck in your next hunt and maybe you wore things from that. So maybe if you were the best hunter, you had the coolest jewelry.

Travis: Well, yeah. That makes complete sense, right? Once again, I mean, if you think about animal nature, right?

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: Which, humans are animals, when you look at, like, mating rituals and dominance rituals and all that, there's a lot of "Look at what I can collect! Look at how cool my nest is!"

Teresa: Exactly.

Travis: So then if you have, like, "Oh, that guy? That guy's a great hunter, just look at his neck." Right? Like, it makes complete sense.

Teresa: Um, and we mentioned religious aspects as well. So there were necklaces and adornments that were made to pay homage to specific gods.

Travis: I like how you said that.

Teresa: [emphasizing the 'h'] Homage.

Travis: Homahge.

Teresa: [laughing] Or even manifest specific goals, like, you know, fertility, wealth, love, luck. All that stuff.

Travis: Live, laugh, love... Yeah, I get it!

Teresa: [giggling] Wear your necklaces.

Travis: Yeah. I bet there is a live, laugh, love necklace out there, so...

Teresa: [singsong] I bet that there is! There's another example from ancient Iran, uh, dating from around 3000 into 400 BCE.

Travis: That's also old. Just for the record.

Teresa: Very old, yes.

Travis: Anything over 50 years old, though, is old to me, so...

Teresa: [laughs] And they carry a lot of spiritual meanings, and they're decorated with things like stars, and floral designs. And it was made as offerings to the gods, or used to dress up statues, which I thought was pretty cool.

Um, mummies have been found with, you know, encrusted with headdresses and necklaces and earrings.

Travis: Not surprised by that at all, that makes complete sense.

Teresa: And was presumably to honor them in the afterlife, right?

Travis: Yeah. "You *can* take it with you," thought the Egyptians.

Teresa: Thought the Egyptians... [laughs]

Travis: I would like to take this with me. I get that.

Teresa: Exactly, exactly. And we have talked a little bit about Egyptian religion and thought process. One of the things that shows up in jewelry again and again and again is the scarab, right?

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: That beetle, which is— I mean, it's just everywhere. Not only in the ancient Egyptian world, but it's resurfaced in different jewelry trends throughout the centuries.

Travis: Similar to the Eye of Thoth [thoh-th], I think it is? Or Thoth [thaw-th]? Where, you know, it's that kind of eye with, like, the swoopy bit on the end and kind of...

Teresa: Mm, yeah.

Travis: Also the ankh is another one that was very popular then, which I believe is now popular in a lot of, like, mystic traditions and mystic jewelry and that kind of thing. Uh, yeah, man. Egyptian stuff. Looks cool.

Teresa: One of the—

Travis: I should say ancient Egyptian stuff. There is still currently Egyptian stuff which is not the same. Ancient Egyptian—

Teresa: But could still be cool.

Travis: Sure.

Teresa: They were some of the first to use mascots and meaningful colors in their jewelry. For example, the vulture was the symbol of upper Egypt and the cobra for lower Egypt.

Travis: Oh, so—wait. Like literal mascots!

Teresa: Yeah!

Travis: I thought you mean just, like, it's a symbol for life, it's a symbol for—but just more like—

Teresa: Literal mascots.

Travis: Yeah, yeah, vultures! Okay!

Teresa: Well, if you wanted to rep your hometown, you could buy a necklace with one of those on it.

Travis: Yes, I know! Listen, I'm from Huntington, West Virginia, home of the Thundering Herd. I guarantee you there are plenty of Thundering Herd necklaces all around. I get it, man! Okay!

Teresa: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm. And the colors had different meanings. For example, yellow and gold were associated with the sun and the sun god.

Travis: Of course, yeah.

Teresa: Green was imperative to communication, so a green stone was often placed in the mouths of the pharaohs before they were entombed.

Travis: Hopefully after they were dead, though, right?

Teresa: Right, yes.

Travis: Okay, great

Teresa: Yes. Red was thought to preserve one's soul. Um, so like, there's just so much rich, ancient history behind all this jewelry stuff, right?

Travis: Except for diamonds! Go on. I'll get to that later, go on.

Teresa: [laughs] Okay. Um, so, jewelry. Pretty awesome! Until...

Travis: Oh, no.

Teresa: The fall of Rome.

Travis: Okay. What about the winter of Rome? Or the summer of Rome?

Teresa: Eh! Wah-wah-wahhh!

Travis: Okay, go on.

Teresa: The church came along and, as they do, they ruined everything.
[laughs]

Travis: Well, I'm trying to find the fault in it, and there's none. Go on.

Teresa: Luxuries like jewelry were no longer a thing that everyone could enjoy. Um, most of the wealth in Europe specifically was laid in the hands of the Catholic church.

Travis: Mm-hmm.

Teresa: In the 10th century, if you wanted to have some—peep some high class jewels, go to the church. Uh, they had gemstone-studded altars and chalices, bedazzled Bibles and such for mass. Like, it was kind of like... [sighs] It was disgusting. [laughs]

Travis: Yeah!

Teresa: Um, and then...

Travis: Especially when you consider that's not the cup of a carpenter, as Indiana Jones would say. At no point was Jesus like, "You know what I love? Jewels. I love that shiny stuff."

Teresa: The Crusades also had a lot of, uh, a lot of this going on. They would go and, you know, loot ancient sites for gems and gold and precious stones, and bring it back, and buy their salvation. Um, with indulgences.

Travis: [simultaneously] Once again, that's not how it works! You can't—it's easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle! Read the book! Okay, sorry, go on.

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: I was raised Southern Baptist and I read the Bible a lot and it makes me mad. Okay.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: I'm no longer practicing, it should be clear.

Teresa: Okay, so, the Crusades, even though they were the pits...

Travis: Yeah, well said.

Teresa: ... opened up a lot of trade between the eastern and the western world at the time. Um, so Europe had an influx of new gemstones and precious metals. And so, like, it was a really great way again for society to

stomp on the poor and say, "Y'all can't have this great stuff. This is for us rich only." Um...

Travis: Okay, can I—can I say? This is one of the inherently, I would say, inherent problems with jewelry, right?

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: Because what we're really talking about when we talk about it is value and beauty—or beauty, right? Two different things, right?

Teresa: Right.

Travis: Because I think beauty is somewhere where, you know, you see the sparkle, you see the shine, you see the design, you see the intricate, uh, artistry of it, right? And that's a beauty thing.

Teresa: Right.

Travis: And on the other side of it is value, which is a completely made up perceived thing, right? To say, like, "ah, gold is worth this much." Gold actually has very little practical application, right?

So the problem is then it becomes a status symbol and not just the beauty and the artistry of it, but about, like, the more you have, clearly you can invest in it and buy it instead of buying things like, I don't know, food, right?

Teresa: Sure.

Travis: And— Anyways, I just wanted to acknowledge that there is, as we talk about valuing, lowercase 'v', jewelry, I want to acknowledge that there is an inherent classist, you know, problem with it.

Teresa: Absolutely. And sometimes there is an outwardly classist attempt called a sumptuary law.

Travis: Go on.

Teresa: Um, so—

Travis: No, you know what? I can't wait to hear about it. But first... How about a thank you note for our sponsors?

Teresa: Alright!

[theme music plays]

Travis: This week, *Shmanners* wants to write a thank you note to Made In. If quality and craftsmanship is important to you, you should check out Made In. Made In is a cookware and kitchenware brand that works with renowned chefs and artisans to produce some of the world's best pots, pans, knives, and wine glasses.

Made In sources the finest materials and partners with renowned craftsman to make kitchen tools available directly to you without the markup. Their cookware distributes heat evenly and can easily go from stovetop to the oven. And their knives are fully forged, perfectly balanced, and stay sharp.

They have more than 28 thousand five-star reviews, and their products are used by some of the world's best chefs at Michelin Starred restaurants around the world. Trust me, folks. This stuff looks great, feels great to use, and it just has that feeling of it's gonna be around for a while, right? This is an investment you're making in some quality cookware.

And right now, Made In is offering our listeners 15% off your first order with promo code "shmanners." This is the best discount available anywhere online for Made In products. So go to MadeIn, that's M-A-D-E-I-N, cookware.com/shmanners, and use promo code "shmanners" for 15% off your first order. That's MadeInCookware.com/shmanners and use promo code "shmanners."

We also want to write a thank you note to DoorDash. We've talked about it before, but I'll say it again and again and again. Figuring out what you want for dinner is hard. Making sure you get everything in the store is even harder. Sometimes you go to get that one thing, you come home, and you forgot to get that one thing.

Or sometimes you wake up in the morning and you need a little special pick me up. Maybe some coffee and doughnuts from Dunkin, something like that. Maybe, you know, you don't feel like cooking dinner and you want to order some dinner.

All those things, DoorDash can do for you. DoorDash connects you with the restaurants you love, right now and right to your door, and you can now get grocery essentials with DoorDash, too. Get drinks, snacks, and other household items delivered in under an hour.

Ordering is easy. Open the Door Dash app, choose what you want from where you want, and your items will be left safely outside your door with the contactless delivery drop off setting. For a limited time, our listeners can get 25% off and zero delivery fees on their first order of 15 dollars or more when you download the DoorDash app and enter code "shmannerspod," all one word.

That's 25% off, up to a ten dollar value, and zero delivery fees on your first order when you download the DoorDash app in the App Store and enter code "shmannerspod." Subject to change, terms apply.

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Janet: Hey! I'm Janet Varney, host of the *JV Club* podcast!

[school bell rings]

Janet: Ah, high school. Was it a time of adventure, romance, and discovery?

Student 1: Class of '95! We did it!

Janet: Or... a time of angst, disappointment, and confusion?

Student 2: We're all tied together by four years of trauma at this place, but enjoy adulthood I guess.

Janet: The truth is, it was both. So join me on the *JV Club* podcast, where I invite some great friends like Kristen Bell, Angela Kinsey, Oscar Nunez, Neil Patrick Harris, and Keegan-Michael Key, to talk about high school. The good, the bad, and everything in between.

Student 1: My teenage mood swings are getting... [voice pitches down] harder to manage!

Janet: The *JV Club*. Find it on Maximum Fun.

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Travis: Okay, I believe you said the word "sumptuary?"

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: Which, I'm mad that it's associated with, I think, something bad, because it's a fun word to say.

Teresa: [laughs] Uh, they were laws made for the purpose of restraining luxury or extravagance, particularly against inordinate expenditures for apparel, food, furniture, et cetera. Basically, they were laws to enforce social discrimination.

Travis: No, way. Basically a law that says, "hey, you don't have money. You can't buy that."

Teresa: Yep.

Travis: [affronted] What the—what—

Teresa: Uh, there were, for example, four categories of rings that one was allowed to wear as A Poor.

Travis: What?

Teresa: Ecclesiastical rings, carrying sacred symbols, reserved for clergy and laymen expressing their faith. Curative rings, they were fashioned from specific metals meant to cure ailments and diseases.

Travis: Uh-huh.

Teresa: Wedding rings.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: And gadget rings, like brass knuckles, compass rings, and pipe stuffers.

Travis: Oh, okay. Well, that—I like that last one. I don't like the law.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: All of this goes to say that most people who were able to wear jewelry either, you know, lawfully or because of the status, were rich people. And by the time the 16th century rolled around, jewelry was synonymous with royalty.

Travis: Mm-hmm.

Teresa: Henry VIII would boast that he owned over 234 rings, 324 brooches, countless diamond and pearl studded necklaces. Uh, his daughter, Elizabeth I—

Travis: Can you imagine how loud he was when he wore all that stuff?

Teresa: Oh, totally.

Travis: Just imagine all the rings, he probably couldn't bend his fingers.

Teresa: Elizabeth I had thousands of dresses, weighted down with pearls and gemstones and things. I mean, they were just dripping with jewels, and nobody did it better than King Louis XIV.

Travis: Oh, yeah, Sun King.

Teresa: Absolutely.

Travis: Is it—yeah, he's the Sun King.

Teresa: Yep.

Travis: That court, uh, apparently stunk, but yeah, a lot of flashy jewelry. Peacocking it left and right.

Teresa: Yep. His reign took place from 1642 to 1715, and during that time, more large were imported from India than at any other time in history.

Travis: Wow.

Teresa: In fact, it's believed that the Hope Diamond was brought to Louis' court to be set in a necklace by the royal jewelers... [whispers] ... before it was stolen.

Travis: [gasps] Okay.

Teresa: There's this whole thing about the Hope Diamond that I won't get into.

Travis: No, it's a whole story for a different podcast.

Teresa: Right. Um, so, I think that we can move safely on to the 17th century. Um, and the Baroque period was when—

Travis: The 17th century or 1700s?

Teresa: 17th century. That's the 1600s.

Travis: Oh, okay. I thought we were already there because we were talking about Louis.

Teresa: Oh, sorry. In another part of the design, here.

Travis: Ah, gotcha.

Teresa: So we are moving into an era of Baroque design, which—

Travis: And as I always say...

Teresa: [sighs]

Travis: ... if it ain't Baroque...

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: ... don't fix it! Okay, go on. I'm so sorry, I'm so sorry, I'm so sorry.

Teresa: It comes from a Portuguese word for misshapen pearl.

Travis: Oh!

Teresa: Um, so, gemstones fall out of fashion. Pearls and diamonds are the tops there. And this is when ornamental swords become the fashion symbols for men, and small swords from the period could be inlaid with precious metals and enamel scenes depicting everything from, like, ships to flowers.

Travis: Okay. I do think that's cool. Ah, man.

Teresa: Now we're gonna skip to the 19th century.

Travis: Okay. Victorian?

Teresa: Victorian, that's right! And this is wear, like, so many things... things that were for everyone - I mean if you were rich enough, right? - become gendered.

Travis: Yes. Well, this is where you start—I really—okay, once again, as I've often said...

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: ... there is someone out there who can probably define this better than me, but I think at this point this is when advertising really becomes a thing, and figuring out that if I specialize in men's jewelry, right? Or women's jewelry, right? Now I'm cornering a market, right?

Teresa: Sure.

Travis: As opposed to, like, I'm just someone who carries everything, right? When you start specializing your store, people know where to go, and it's easier to advertise, that's my bet.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: Right? That it's not about, uh, science, or biology, or any of these things. It is about advertising. Go on.

Teresa: We see—

Travis: Which will come up again in diamonds.

Teresa: [laughing] In diamonds.

Travis: Go on, go on. Just—we're gonna keep teasing it.

Teresa: We've talked about the arts and crafts movement. There was also a parallel movement in jewelry making, and at the dawn of the 20th century, arts and crafts jewelers avoided large, faceted stones and relied on making shaped and polished gems, which I think is very interesting.

Travis: Mm-hmm.

Teresa: Okay. We are up to the 1900s, and art nouveau style caused another dramatic shift in jewelry design. Um, went from flowery, showy

designs, back to very simple. It is kind of—I don't know, sensual in design? It's a... let's see. It's highly curved, and...

Travis: Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah. There's—that's thing is, if you look at, like, deco and nouveau, it's very much, like... what I picture is a figure splashing out of something, right? In nouveau, it's very much like Venus on the Waves, you know? There's a curl of flower and wave lining...

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: In deco, it's very much like there's rays of sun, these like, strong rectangular shapes, you know what I mean?

Teresa: Right.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: And so we come up to the 1950s, 1960s. This is when jewelry becomes kind of like an 'up yours' as a status symbol, right? This is when things come out, like, plastics and paper and textiles and safety pins. And, like—

Travis: Oh, so punk—a lot of punk stuff.

Teresa: Not just punk but, like, "See, I can make jewelry out of anything. I can make this great jewelry out of things that don't have to be precious." And also costume jewelry, right?

Travis: So this is where we get into that beauty, right, versus value, right? So it could be like, "Oh, look at this lovely necklace. It cost me \$15." Right, right, right? Instead of—and also as we talk about symbols, you get into the '60s...

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: You got the peace sign, right? Like...

Teresa: Absolutely.

Travis: Like, you have all these big shifts in, once again, jewelry being a symbolic thing. I mean, we talk about punk, right? You think about pins, and badges, and safety pins, and all of these chokers and chains and stuff like that. It's all about the representation rather than the value.

Teresa: Exactly. And that's how, you know, we have several episodes talking about, like, the pendulum of, like, the social acceptance and all those sort of things, so like... uh, during that time period, there was a big swing toward the subversion of the, you know, like, the physical value you were talking about. It's pretty awesome.

Travis: I also, once again, am willing to bet that you could do another, like, whole section—I don't know how much more you have to talk about, like, time period-wise... But then we also—

Teresa: No, we're done. We're done with that.

Travis: I remember growing up in, like, the '80s and '90s where men's jewelry became very muted, if at all, because people were worried about being perceived as homosexuals.

Teresa: Mm.

Travis: Were worried about being seen as gay. To the point where there was the which—which ear are you gonna wear your earring in? Because one ear's—

Teresa: Right.

Travis: And it was like, such... not even veiled homophobia, very prevalent. And so it makes me very happy to see, now, that that pendulum has, thank God, swung the other way, where everybody can be more comfortable expressing themselves, uh, by wearing as much or as little jewelry as they want.

Now I want to talk about diamonds.

Teresa: I would love to hear you talk about diamonds.

Travis: So, we got a question from Motorcycle Stepdad, @trashmeatball. "Was a diamond ring, other expensive piece of jewelry, always standard to present to someone when proposing marriage, or is that a recent tradition?"

So one, it should be important to note that engagement rings have, uh, historically, for a long time, or at least originally, were seen as kind of a... uh, sign of ownership, right?

Teresa: Right, yes. We—please go visit the, uh, our wedding selection.

Travis: Right. This was not a promise you were making to your partner, but rather an indication to the world of, "Well, they're taken," right? But let's talk about the diamond aspect of it, right?

So the first time diamonds appeared on an engagement ring was 1477, right? But that was not—it did not then increase in popularity and in fact, diamonds as both, like, an engagement and wedding ring and as a valuable...

Teresa: Right.

Travis: ... gem, wasn't until 1947.

Teresa: Let's say *the* most valuable gem.

Travis: No, because here's the thing. Actually, as far as gemstones go, diamonds are incredibly common, right? They are not rare, there is nothing inherently valuable, as far as, like, rarity goes, about a diamond. So what it is is, De Beers started this campaign of, uh, diamonds are forever, right?

Teresa: Mm.

Travis: And the reason was—is it was, like, people were selling stuff back, right? Doing—there is a resale market, right? And people are selling off their diamond rings, then someone else can buy a diamond ring.

They're not buying new diamonds, you know what I mean? So, like, that money has not been going to De Beers, it's going to the people who are reselling these rings.

Teresa: Right.

Travis: And so, De Beers started this campaign of, "Diamonds are forever." And what they have also done is, De Beers has, like, a complete monopoly on diamond flow. And so they just let it trickle out.

So there are actually all of these diamonds just in a warehouse somewhere, not being used, and they let a very limited amount go out at a time, which increases the value of them...

Teresa: Right, manufactured scarcity.

Travis: And, it is important to note – most of those diamonds come from very, very, very problematic sources. Either they are taken from countries where it's about warlords getting those diamonds and then selling it for profit. It is from places where these precious minerals are being taken from that country without paying that country for their minerals, a lot of things. Diamonds are bad.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Now, I'm not saying if you have a diamond on your finger, you are a bad person. But I am saying, I think it's time to stop valuing diamonds. It's completely manufactured. We're—like, we were talking about advertising.

The only reason people think they should have diamonds is because people have been told they should have diamonds. It doesn't symbolize anything historically, there is no, like, "Ah, a diamond has always been—" It's not. We should stop. Okay.

Teresa: Alright.

Travis: We have other questions, though.

Teresa: Great! Let's get to some other questions.

Travis: Okay. Uh, Kai asked, "When it comes to ear piercings in the workplace, how should they be worn? What is the expectation for style?" First thing I'll say is, if you're working in a manufacturing job, you should be careful.

I recently was wearing an earring, I was wearing ear protection while I was blacksmithing. The ear protection got caught on my earring, and I had to get my teacher's help.

Teresa: Right.

Travis: So...

Teresa: So we always want to do function over form, depending upon the job you're doing, right? But as far as, like, "professional jewelry," it really comes down to what your employee handbook says. Um, but in general, probably something that isn't too distracting or noisy, right?

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Things that are, like, bangles or large sparkly earrings or something could be distracting to some people. Um, and, you know I think that it's more about... Not about the amount of jewelry, but the kind of jewelry you're wearing.

So if you have, like, eight piercings all the way up your ear, but you got little studs or whatever that don't interfere with your job or anybody else, wear 'em!

Travis: I will also say, um, while I think it is good to go by an employee handbook, because you don't want to get fired or whatever, I think it is also important to note that they are not updated regularly.

Teresa: Oh, they certainly aren't.

Travis: I've found a lot of times that, if you just go to a boss or management and say, "Is this cool?" The answer is probably gonna be yes. Or, "Just hide it if corporate comes by."

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Because, like for example, there are a lot of outdated stuff about—that men can't wear earrings, or there's a lot of stuff about tattoos that just don't really fly anymore...

Teresa: Right, that are completely outdated.

Travis: ... facial hair, a lot of stuff like that. Um, visible earrings. I think there's something about, like, people who work at Disney can't paint their fingernails or something? I don't know. But I think it's worth to ask your boss instead of just assume it's not okay.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: Uh, Kirsten asks, "How are you supposed to function while wearing rings? Do you take them off to wash your hands, to put on lotion, to eat messy food?" Yes, yes, and yes.

Teresa: Uh, yes. All of those things are great practices. Do make sure that you don't put your rings on the sink, uh, because they will probably fall down the drain.

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: But... I don't really take them off. You're supposed to take—

Travis: Oh, come on, you gross-o.

Teresa: I don't take off my wedding ring and my engagement ring, um, because not only are they very difficult to take off, I don't have any place to put them usually. So, yes, I do wear them swimming, showering...

Travis: Yeah, I guess you don't have pockets like I do.

Teresa: ... doing my hair. Yeah, not everything I wear has pockets like you. Um, and so, yes, you should take them off because the dirt, the grime, it all eats away, but...

Travis: Let me tell you the one time—

Teresa: ... don't feel bad if you don't take it off.

Travis: The one time you *do* need to take it off, if you are working with tools, you should take off your rings. You should also take off necklaces, any kind of hanging jewelry, especially if you're working with power tools.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: Things can get caught, injuries can happen. With rings – and this is a content warning, because this is a little graphic. Very graphic, in fact. A thing that can happen is called 'gloving,' where if a ring is caught, it can pull the layer of skin off of your finger—

Teresa: Didn't that happen to—

Travis: Jimmy Fallon.

Teresa: Jimmy Fallon!

Travis: Um, and it couldn't—it can get even worse than that. So if you're going to be working with power tools, working with any kind of tools, working in a shop, anything like that, make sure you take your rings off for safety.

Teresa: You should also probably take it off for sleeping. I do, definitely, if I wear earrings, I take those out before I go to bed. Um, it can, again, cause your jewelry to wear faster.

Also, it can break your jewelry. It can also give you, um, infection if you wear it too long. But I still don't take my ring off.

Travis: Also, don't go to a Claire's to get your ears pierced.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Go to, like, a professional—go to, like, a tattoo parlor or a piercing parlor, something like that.

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: Don't—if you work at Claire's, I didn't say that, okay? I still think you're great. Um, Haven wants to know, "Can you talk about the tradition of the Claddagh ring? I think it's really sweet and not enough people know about it."

Yes, so basically, if you've ever seen a ring where it's like two hands holding a heart with a crown, right? Uh, then that is the Claddagh ring. So, the heart is the central feature of the ring. Um, the heart represents love, the crown is a symbol of royalty or loyalty, and the hands represent friendship. So you can view this ring as commitment, basically.

Um, and there are different ways to wear it. If you wear it on your left hand, then you're wearing it on your left ring finger, with the bottom of the heart pointing toward you, the point of the heart. Then you are sending the message that you are married.

There is—also, you can wear it so it's facing the other way, I believe, then it is showing that you are engaged but not married. If you wear it on your right hand, then it is generally seen, um... that—if you are single and open to the idea of a relationship, wear a Claddagh ring on your ring finger with the heart pointing toward—outward. Um... there's a lot.

Uh, your heart is open to love, and if you're dating someone, whether casually or seriously, you opt to wear your ring on your right finger with the heart pointing toward you. This shows that someone has a claim on your heart.

Teresa: Okay!

Travis: Yeah, lot of—lot of symbolism. Let's see, this is from, uh... @twopercentgold. "Is it true that jewelry was a traditional gift demanded by women because it could be sold easily and to provide them with some financial security when they couldn't have their own bank accounts?" Yes.

Teresa: Yes. We have talked about this, the, uh... we talked about this in, um... oh, gosh, one of our Victorian episodes I think?

Travis: I believe so, yes.

Teresa: So women, historically, were not given property rights. They were not expected to work, all that kind of thing. And it's not—jewelry is something that you can take with you easily, because you wear it on yourself. It's not like you can—you have to, uh, like, I don't know. Search for that painting that your dad gave you or whatever.

Travis: Right, you can run out the house with it on you.

Teresa: You can run out of the house with it on if you needed to, and it has a generally accepted value.

Travis: Correct.

Teresa: Um, and so, some of the things that the laws reflect, according to this, is these kind of jewelry gifts are non—like, you're not expected to return them, according to the law, um, because they're... you know. It's a little bit of an insurance policy, just like you said.

Travis: Yep. One last question here, this is from the CGJG Bringer account. "What's a tasteful amount slash location of jewelry for someone who hasn't worn any before?"

Teresa: So there are two schools of thought on this. The first one is, uh, Coco Chanel always said, "Before you leave the house, take off one piece of your jewelry, take off one accessory." Because the feeling at the time is less is more. But also, there's the school of thought of more is more. [laughs]

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: So, some people love to make a statement, and I definitely think that if you want to make a statement, there's some really great, like, just trends to follow. Um, bigger, more sparkly stuff is usually reserved for evening wear, um, and it is generally reserved that you're not really supposed to mix metals.

So like, if you're wearing a silver necklace, you should probably wear a silver-toned earring, bracelet, ring, those sorts of things. But some metals look really nice together.

Travis: Mm-hmm.

Teresa: Rose gold goes with a lot of different colors of things.

Travis: I think silver and copper also.

Teresa: Silver and copper can look really nice. Um, the thing is, it's about attitude.

Travis: Yeah, self-expression.

Teresa: Yeah!

Travis: I would also recommend, um, one—okay, there's also a whole practicality level of, some metals will leave rings.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: Like—hah, ironically. No, I mean like, stains on your finger, right? That kind of thing. Um, if you have any allergies, along those levels, but I think you're also talking about two different things, right? Are you going out for a special occasion, right?

Because then if I'm going out for a special occasion, I got, you know, tie pins, I have lapel pins, I have earrings, I have, you know, collar clips, I have bracelets, I have watches, I have all kinds of things, right? But if we're talking about—

Teresa: Cufflinks.

Travis: Yes, cufflinks, all these things. Boot candy. If you're talking about every day wear, my recommendation is adding one piece at a time until you get comfortable with it.

Because if it's me and I'm like, you know what? I want to try wearing a necklace and rings and a bracelet, and I wear it all at once, I'm going to feel the presence of it in a distracted way.

Teresa: Right, yeah.

Travis: And so, like, I currently wear three rings. I have my wedding ring, I have a ring that I got with Bebe's birthstone, when Bebe was born, and I have a thumb ring that's made out of a West Virginia state quarter, right?

Now, I tried to wear four rings, because I got another ring when Dot was born and I found it was—physically, the sensation was too much. So now I swap out the Bebe ring and the Dot ring, and I'm getting used to the feel of the other one, right?

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: Um, because like, it's all about finding what are you comfortable, physically, wearing? Earrings, I wear and I completely forget they're there.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Until I put in, like, a heavy one and you can physically feel the weight in your—

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: It's weird. But I think it's about finding what you are comfortable with, what represents you.

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: So that's gonna do it for us. Another great episode, if I do say so myself!

Teresa: [giggles]

Travis: I had a lot of fun on that one!

Teresa: Oh, good! Me too.

Travis: Thank you! And thank you to everybody who, you know, comes, listens to each episode, tells their friends about the episodes...

Teresa: Submits topics!

Travis: Submits topics to the episode. Um, so got a couple big news points I want to tell you guys about. We're doing a *My Brother, My Brother and Me* live show, with opener *Sawbones*. That show is going to be on June 25th at nine PM Eastern time, and you can get those tickets now.

It's a virtual show, so you can watch it anywhere. Bit.ly/mbmbamvirtual. Tickets are just \$10, and the good news is, if that eastern time doesn't work for you or if you're busy that day, there is a video on demand that will be available for two weeks after the show.

Teresa: How great!

Travis: So even if you miss it, you've got two weeks to watch it. We got new merch over at McElroy Merch! We got a pin of the month that is a picture of Griffin saying, "I also want a sword," from the *My Brother, My Brother and Me* TV show, and that pin benefits the Trevor Project which is—uh, provides crisis intervention and suicide prevention services to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and questioning folks, young people under 25.

We're also selling a "We're Legends" shirt, which is an *Adventure Zone* reference, and a portion of that is going to support the Trevor Project as well. You can preorder *The Adventure Zone* comic at

theadventurezonecomic.com. The next graphic novel comes out July 13th of 2021, that's this year! And if you preorder the gift, you can get a Kravitz lenticular laptop sticker when you submit your receipt for preorder at bit.ly/taz4preorder.

We also want to say thank you to Maximum Fun. We want to say thank you to you. We want to tell you, go check out mcelroy.family. What else? What do we always say here?

Teresa: Well, we always thank Brent "Brental Floss" Black for writing our theme music, which is available as a ringtone where those are found. We'd like to thank Kayla M. Wasil for our Twitter thumbnail art. @shmannerscast is where we get all of our listener submitted questions and queries for our episode.

We'd love to thank Bruja Betty Pinup Photography for the cover picture of our fan-run Facebook group, *Shmanners Fanners*. I got a little tongue twisted there.

Travis: But you got there!

Teresa: I got there! If you love to give and get excellent advice from other fans, go ahead and join that group. We'd also love to thank Alex, our researcher, writer. And thank you, our Max Fun supporters, for affording us to pay her.

Travis: Yeah, we couldn't do it without you, and we couldn't do the show without Alex.

Teresa: Um, she checks every single email for the *Shmanners* account, shmannerscast@gmail.com, and she is always looking for your suggestions. We are making schedules, we are getting to them. Please, keep submitting them. Also, submit those idioms! We love them.

Travis: And that's gonna do it for us! So join us again next week.

Teresa: No RSVP required.

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

Teresa: [whispers] Manners, *Shmanners*. Get it?

[theme music plays]

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