

Shmanners 130: Ask Shmanners

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[theme music plays]

[both speaking more quietly than usual]

Travis: Hello, internet! I am 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: Well...

Travis: Here's what happened.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: So... we were like, "Okay, we're leaving next week. So let's record an *Ask Shmanners* episode."

And then we promptly forgot that.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: And here we are, at Disney World, in our hotel room, specifically where?

Teresa: In the closet.

Travis: In the closet. We are hiding, because Bebe is asleep, and we want to record, and we don't want to skip this week, so we are recording—we're coming to you recorded live from Disney World—

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: —Beach Club Resort, in the closet.

Teresa: In the closet.

Travis: In the closet.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Luckily, it's a very spacious closet.

Teresa: I mean, room enough for both of us and two suitcases.

Travis: Yeah. We're having a great time and we have some of your questions that we would like to answer. Here—let's just get right into it. Christine asks:

"What's the etiquette for when a plumber, electrician, or general handyperson is doing work at your place? Do you offer them anything? Stick around to watch them work?"

Teresa: Well, I think that you can offer a, um—a serviceperson some water if it's a hot day, or they're doing some, you know, difficult job. But it's not necessary. I mean, one of the things that Travis reminds me constantly is that this is not the first time that this person has done this, so going to someone's home, installing cable, or fixing a ceiling fan...

Travis: It's unique for *you*.

Teresa: It's—yeah. It's unique for you, but they have encountered a person who this is their first time having a handyperson over all the time. And so really, um, what you should do is make sure that the work space is clear and available, um, and you should, if you feel inclined, you can offer maybe a glass of water. Um, but other than that, I would say be home, but don't watch. [laughs]

Travis: Yeah. My advice is to, um—it's a two part process. Part one is, "Do you need anything?" And then part two is to say, "Okay, well, if you need anything, I will be in my office," or "I'll be in the kitchen," or "I'll be whatever," right? So that way you're saying, like, "Feel comfortable coming and telling me if you have any questions or anything, but I'm not gonna hover over you the whole time.

Teresa: Exactly.

Travis: I will tell you, I went out on a couple Best Buy installations where I helped somebody install, like, sound systems and TVs and everything, and almost never is it appreciated when you hover over. Because here's the thing. A lot of these installations, for the first, like, 90% of it, it doesn't look pretty.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: Right? They have to, like, cut holes in your wall and, like, drill into stuff. And, like, it's not the kind of thing that you want people to see, because until it's done, it doesn't look pretty.

Teresa: Yeah, yeah.

Travis: And, like, I've had—I have seen people, like, "Ooh—oh, uh, could you not—" And I'm like, "This is how it has to happen, trust me, by the end of it it'll look good."

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: Right? So sometimes it's best just not to watch the sausage get made. Um, this is from Swaddle.

"What's the most polite way to get out of a social event. Like, if you've made an appearance at a dinner party, but don't want to stay longer than 90 minutes, how do you get the hell out of there without hurting feelings?"

Teresa: Um, well, I think that it's not about what you say, it's how you do it.

Travis: Mm-hmm.

Teresa: Um, definitely don't leave without saying goodbye. Don't do that. I believe that is called, what? Ghosting?

Travis: Sure.

Teresa: Is that what the kids are saying?

Travis: Mm-hmm. It's called Houdini-ing.

Teresa: [laughs] Don't do that.

Travis: No.

Teresa: Um, you need to make sure, first of all, that you thank the host, whoever you were there to see or to celebrate. Maybe it's a birthday party, or whatever. Um, and then make your kind of "Nice to see you"s, "It's so great, let's do this again," kind of as you're going out the door. There's no need to really make excuses, especially if this is something where it's, like, a come and go as you please, and it's not, like, a formal event of, you know, speeches and dinner and... et cetera.

Travis: Now, they specifically said in here "dinner party," and I think if that's the case it's really important to tell your host ahead of time, like, "I won't be staying the whole time." Because especially if they're planning, like, courses or, like, person-specific food, right? Where it's like—like, for example if it was Cornish game hens, right? That they were making for everybody. They would have one of those for every person. Or, like, individual pies or cakes or something, right? You want to be able to, like, give them an accurate head count.

Teresa: But after 90 minutes, I would say that probably dinner is over.

Travis: Probably.

Teresa: I would not suggest that you leave in the middle of dinner.

Travis: Correct. I think that it's just—it's important to establish expectations. Like, if you say, like, "Hey, I would love to come, I'm going to be there. Just so you know, I'm not going to be able to stay very long. Um, but I would be happy—" you know, that kind of thing.

Teresa: If you need to, you can even—you might get away with the tiny fib of "I have a few prior commitments."

[pause]

Travis: [through a yawn] And also there's—[normally] that was a huge yawn. Sorry, everybody. Also, there's always the option of, like, "I'm not feeling well," or "I have a headache." It's cliché, but, like... you know. Rather than say, like, "Hey, my social anxiety—" I would also say, like, if it's someone you're really close to... like, I have a lot of friends—

Teresa: Maybe you could say—

Travis: Right.

Teresa: "My social anxiety is—[laughs] is really acting up. I need to go."

Travis: I have a lot of friends that I would be like, "Hey, I think 90 minutes is all I can stand to be around people today," and I think they would totally understand. You know what I mean? So I think, like, if it's someone that you—the nice thing is—oh, and there's a huge [crosstalk]—

Teresa: Look what you made me do.

Travis: —yeah, huge yawn from Teresa. The other side of it is, if it's someone you're not super close to, they probably won't be too miffed if you leave after 90 minutes. You know what I mean? So I think it's win-win there. Either you can be honest with them 'cause they're a close friend, or they're not a close friend so you don't need to be completely honest. Uh, this is from Noah.

"Hi! I'm a trans man in the food service industry. What's a polite way to correct a customer if they misgendered me? If I don't correct, further mistakes can be made in the future if they return, but I also don't want to make their experience uncomfortable."

Teresa: I think that the important part isn't about how you correct, it's about the tone of correction. There's no need to apologize for your pronouns, but it should be in a gentle way, just so that—especially in this service industry that you're in, I want to make sure that those customers come back to you.

Travis: And tip you good, it was I was going to say.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Tip you well. I think if I were you, what I would do is say—is do the correction. I'd be like, "It's 'he' actually, and what can I get you to drink?"

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: And, like, move to another point.

Teresa: So that there's nothing hovering in the air.

Travis: Right. Because, like—so that way you don't have to say, like, "It's 'he.'"

And then they feel the need to respond, which is usually where the awkwardness comes from.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: But if you give them an out of, like, "It's 'he' actually, and is that Diet Coke? Is Coke okay?" Like, you know what I mean? Like, whatever, and move past it.

And once again, I also think this is assuming, as you've said in the question, that you don't want to make them uncomfortable, which is super cool of you to worry about in the service industry, but I think that it's the kind of thing where you don't have to hem and haw too much. You can say it without super worrying about their kind of reaction, if you—yeah.

Teresa: Because they're gonna go off of your demeanor. So, if you talk about it like "This is what I want, and... take it, I guess?" [laughs]

Travis: Yeah! I mean, for example last night, um, we had a server whose name was Ibrahim. I think at one point somebody at the table called him Abraham, and he just said "Ibrahim," as he was, like, clearing a dish. And it was nothing. And, like, that's the kind of thing, is no matter what the reason, if there's something about you, be it a name or pronouns or whatever, that they get wrong, like, I am all about identity, like, in every way. If someone mispronounced my name I might flip the table. [laughs quietly] No, I wouldn't do that.

Teresa: No.

Travis: But I think it's okay to take some pride in your identity.

Teresa: Absolutely.

Travis: Um, this is from Cheyenne.

"When it comes to emails, how much time should pass before you open your response with 'Sorry for the delay'? Also, how do you make important emails feel less terrifying?"

Teresa: Oh boy. You know, the thing about emails is they are instant in delivery, but it's the thing about, like, replying, right? Which it just can take... alright. We have discussed a little bit about this, in the way of, like... how much time is too much time, but how much time is enough time, and then how much time should you wait till you reply, and we've talked about these kind of things. And the truth of the matter is, the person who has sent the email is always just waiting for your reply. And I don't know if the waiting will be better if you make them wait 'til the next day, or... I—

Travis: Let me tell you. Here's the thing.

Teresa: —okay, okay. [laughs quietly]

Travis: So, *Reply All*, a great podcast that you should listen to, has a thing. I believe it's April 30th, and it's called Email Debt Forgiveness Day. And the idea is, like, it's the day to send your emails that you've been sitting on and waiting to reply on without having to say sorry. And they've talked about it a lot on various Debt Forgiveness Day episodes, and one of the things that they have pointed out that I think is important to keep in mind is I think that you start to feel all this pressure that you put on yourself to respond well, and to, like, answer in detail and give a great explanation, when most emails you can answer with, like, yes or no, or, like, "Okay, great, thank you."

And, like, that feels abrupt, and I think we want to have, like, "Oh, thank you so much for your email. It was so wonderful to hear from you. Yes, on that question, I guess I—" when you don't have to, right? Like, if they asked you that question in person would you respond that way? Or just, like, "Yeah, that sounds great."

And so, like, I try—because when I tell myself that I have to respond in kind, I'll sit there for days and just stare at the email. But if I'm like, "Just answer the question," it's like, "Yeah, that sounds great."

Like, I send, like, three word responses.

Teresa: Except for business emails, I would say. Business emails need to be the next business day. By the next business day.

Travis: Yeah, but even that, like—yes, by the next business day. But even that, one of the things that my wonderful wife has been a great influence on me on in all things is that you don't have to say as much as you think you do.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: And, like, especially when it comes to, like, explanations or apologies or whatever, you want to give all these reasons, and you wanna—and what you're really doing, at least subconsciously, is trying to justify yourself, and hoping the other person will say, like, "Oh, that totally makes sense. Don't worry about it!"

When really all you have to say is, like, "Sorry for the delay. Yes, that sounds great."

Teresa: And if you are asking when that might be appropriate, that response, "Sorry for the delay," um, I think that if you cannot get to something by the next business day, you can send a little catch up email to be, "Sorry for the delay, I'm working on this response. I'll have it to you by..." and then state the time that you'll have it by. Because the waiting is the hardest part.

Travis: And, don't be afraid to say, like, "Hey, thanks. I'm super busy right now. Can you ask me again in four days?" Or whatever. Because sometimes, you know, it's gonna get lost in the shuffle, and you know it's gonna get lost in the shuffle, and you're gonna forget about it. So say, like, "Hey, I can't get to this right now. Can you ask me again on Friday?"

I think that works. Uh, Cara asks:

"I want to have my friends over for more things — game nights, dinners, et cetera — but I find myself second guessing if anyone would actually show up. Is

there a polite way to gauge their interest without the social pressure of planning things?"

Teresa: I think what you need to do is you need to start planting it, and realizing that not everyone is gonna show up the first couple times. You might catch two or three people, maybe you'll catch four the next time. So, like, if you wanna have all your friends come over, you have to start building it into the social calendar. Um, so if you want to have a game night, say, invite all of those people, and expect two or three to come, so that you can play an intimate game.

And then the next, say, if you want to do this once a month, or you want to do it once a week, you know, do it on a regular basis so that people come to expect this invitation, so that as their social calendar gets kind of molded around it, more and more people will come.

Travis: Um, and let me tell you from personal experience, soft invites get soft answers.

Teresa: Right.

Travis: And so what you'll get a lot of is, if you say, "Hey, could anybody do—" what you'll get is like, "[thoughtfully] Yeah, I think I could do that." And, like, that's nothing.

Teresa: [simultaneously] And then nobody shows up, yeah.

Travis: Right. What you want to say—I have found that a two week—you want to, I think, like, within...

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: ... 14 days to 8 days is the window. So, like, within that two week period, to give people enough notice that they probably don't have something else planned, but without making it seem so far in advance that they're unwilling to commit to it.

Teresa: Right.

Travis: Um, and a nice big window of time to say, like, 6:00 to 10:00, because then you might end up with people who can't come 'til 7:00 or something, and you're like, "Okay, great."

But the fact of the matter is, it's—the nature of it is that people—you're not gonna get everybody to come who you invite. That's just the way it works. And so if you want to play a game that takes six people, or you want to have dinner for eight, invite ten to twelve, you know?

Um, so we're gonna take a quick break, and we'll be back—

Teresa: To stretch our legs, in the closet. [laughs]

Travis: To stretch our legs. And then we'll be back to answer more of your questions. But first, here's some thank you notes!

[theme music plays]

Teresa: *Shmanners* is sponsored in part this week by Bombas! So, no matter what you are striving for, if you're just walking around—

Travis: Say, around Disney...

Teresa: —say, around Disney...

Travis: Taking, like, 18,000 steps, which we did...

Teresa: Bombas are perfectly engineered to help keep you comfortable. They feature a honeycomb arch support, cushioned foot bed, wide stitched heel, and they are made of super soft and absorbent coffi—[laughs] cotton. Um, and Bombas are the most comfortable socks in the history of feet!

Now, speaking of... I think one day we did, what? 18,000 steps?

Travis: So we did, on Monday, 19,000, on Tuesday, 18,000, on Wednesday, 16,000, and today, 12,000.

Teresa: I have been wearing my Bombas socks, and felt great!

Travis: The most amazing thing to me, and this is not a joke—

Teresa: Listen, I'm tired, and I'm—

Travis: I know.

Teresa: —not gonna lie about that. But the feet feel great.

Travis: This is amazing to me, because I—my feet sweat sometimes! There it is, I'm human.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: After walking around for, no joke, all day... taking the socks off? Socks are still dry. Like, I don't—

Teresa: They, like, whisk away the moisture.

Travis: It's just magical.

Teresa: And very comfortable inside my shoes. I have high arches, and so that honeycomb technology is perfect. I have owned socks that have not touched the bottom of my feet all the way across. These socks do! I like 'em.

And, Bombas donates one brand new pair of socks for every pair they sell! So, to date they've sold and donated over 7 million pairs. Those are one of the most requested things at homeless shelters, are socks. Um, so that's—that's just fantastic.

Another fantastic thing is that our *Shmanners* listeners will get 20% off your first order when they go to bombas.com. That's B-O-M-B-A-S.com to get 20% off of your first order. [Bombas.com/shmanners](https://bombas.com/shmanners), and code "shmanners."

Travis: We are also sponsored this week by Quip. So, listen. Teeth... are made for brushin', and that's just what you do. And one of these days this Quoop—oh! Nope. I blew it.

Teresa: Nope. Aw! So close.

Travis: This Quip is gonna brush all over you. I'm very tired.

Teresa: You were so close! You tripped at the finish line. I'm so sorry.

Travis: I know. Quip was designed to make brushing your teeth more simple, affordable, and even enjoyable. And you know what? I think they nailed it on all three counts. Quip features a built-in two minute timer that pulses every 30 seconds to remind you when to switch sides, helping guide a full and even clean. Can I also say, one of the things I love about it—before Quip, I had a big old bulky electric toothbrush, and I never took it with me when I traveled. It was just too big!

Teresa: You did take your Quip, didn't you?

Travis: But I take my Quip now, yes I do.

Teresa: Because it is a very slim design.

Travis: Oh, it's so easy to take now. And, it comes with this, like, tubular holder that is both tube-shaped, and also tubular.

Teresa: Dude.

Travis: Yeah! And it fits easily in your suitcase or your goody bag or what-have-you. And so now I take it with me whenever I travel. And, the brush heads are automatically delivered on a dentist-recommended schedule every three months for just five dollars. That is a great deal.

Teresa: Before Quip, I don't know how often I replaced my toothbrush.

Travis: Not often enough.

Teresa: Not often enough!

Travis: Uh, Quip is backed by over 20,000 dental professionals, and starts at just 25 dollars. Go to getquip.com/shmanners to get your first refill pack free with a Quip electric toothbrush. That's your first refill pack free at G-E-T-Q-U-I-P.com/shmanners.

James: [exaggerated laughter]

Nekay: What're you laughing at, James?

James: Nnekay! [laughs] I'm laughing at you! [laughs]

Nnekay: What?

James: And me, too!

Nnekay: Huh?!

James: Our podcast, *Minority Korner*, silly!

Nnekay: Ohhh, the one where we talk about topics that cover the queer community, race, feminism, and good old pop culture?

James: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm, yep, that's it! Oh girl, we are so funny! [laughs] Tee hee hee hee! I was just thinking about something we did. [laughs]

Nnekay: Wait, wait, wait. Are you listening to *me*? Or... [echoing distorted voice] Me?

James: Both.

Nnekay: *Minority Korner*.

James: Every Friday!

[music and ad play and end]

April: Listen. We already know that you love genre movies, film craft, and female filmmakers. So, if you love all those things, then by transitive property, you love my podcast, *Switchblade Sisters*.

Hi, I'm film critic April Wolfe. Every week, I have a conversation with a different female filmmaker about their favorite genre film. Each episode covers the film making process, working in the film industry, and just like, general geeking out about awesome movies.

I've had such great guests, like *The Big Sick* writer Emily Gordon.

Emily Gordon: To me, indie movies as of late have come to be a catch all term for a movie that kind of defies genre.

April: Billy Madison and *Half Baked* director, Tamra Davis.

Tamra Davis: When a comedian comes and enters on to my set, they're—they're just there to be funny, and we're all ready and waiting for them to be funny.

April: Horror industry veteran and actor Barbara Crampton.

Barbara Crampton: That's where real drama lies, for me. What's—what's between you and I, speaking right now? Where are we meeting, and what's the energy that we create between us?

April: And so many others. So check out *Switchblade Sisters* every Thursday on Maximumfun.org, or wherever you get your podcasts.

[music and ad play and end]

Travis: Okay. This next question comes from Andy.

"What are some things manners-wise that a teacher could teach students? I'm an art teacher, and while I recognize this stuff starts at home, I want to be a good example for them."

Teresa: First of all, thank you so much. This really is one of the things that we really try and encourage in this podcast, is that really you teach manners by having manners. So, just the fact that you are conscientious about this and you are, you know, living your life in front of these students in a way thinking about the manners you are having, I think is fantastic.

Um, I think that when you're talking about a student-teacher relationship, you need to really put the emphasis on empathy.

Travis: Yeah, that's what I was gonna say.

Teresa: Because when you can imagine yourself on the other side of the conversation, you can, you know, think about how you would want to be treated, and then treat people that way.

Travis: Yeah, and that's a thing that I think is a hard lesson to teach a kid one-on-one. Like, I'm—we're working on—I mean, we talk about it all the time with Bebe where it's like, "Do you think that that's nice? How do you think that makes Mommy feel?"

But I think when you're dealing with a group of kids, the idea of, like, "And how do you think they feel right now because of that?" Is a thing that I think is very important. And not only that, but also, um, listening to other people's ideas and not jumping in with your own ideas is a very important lesson that I think you could teach, especially in art. You know, that idea of, like, let's all work on this thing together, where everyone's opinions—we're going to hear them out and, you know—

Teresa: Or that everyone's opinions are worthy.

Travis: Yeah, exactly.

Teresa: So, the idea where, um, maybe... [sighs] it's been a long time since I've taken an art class, but I guess if you're teaching, you know, impressionist ideals, maybe someone has a different way of doing it than another person, and you can talk to the class about how both of these things that people have produced have artistic worth.

Travis: Yeah. Um, let's see. This question comes from Catherine.

"Just went to a pizza party, and I'm wondering, once someone takes the first piece from a pizza, do you have to take one of the two pieces next in line around the pizza, or can you take a slice from the other side?"

Okay, great question. Let me tell you why you shouldn't take a slice from the other side. Structural integrity.

Teresa: [muffled laughter]

Travis: 'Cause once you take a slice from the other side, it's gonna start to get sl—like, floppier pizza, and then when you try to pick a piece up, especially if it's been a little while, the cheese has cooled down a little bit, you try to pick it up, ugh. That whole half of the pizza's gonna come with you.

Now, that said, Catherine, [quietly] if there's no one around...

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: ... and you see a piece that was cut so it's a little bit bigger than the other pieces, or a little bit smaller, maybe you want a slimmer piece, and you're like, "That's piece is loaded with sausage. I want that piece."

Yeah. You do it.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: You know why? 'Cause pizza is for *you*, Catherine.

Teresa: I'm just gonna say, don't touch all the other pieces of pizza. Just take the one that you touch, wherever it is.

Travis: And then you get some tongs—

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: —and you slide it back together so the two sides touch, and you get a little blowtorch and you melt the cheese back together, and no one will ever know. Do you hear me, Catherine? This secret dies with you! No, I think it's fine. I—I wouldn't do it... as a knee jerk reaction. The only time that I would say, like, it's okay to do it with impunity is if it is, like, "I want a piece of this pizza but, like, it has peppers on it and I don't like peppers, and this slice doesn't—ended up with no peppers on it." I think that's fine.

But yeah, like... just take a piece of pizza, I guess. [whispers] Unless no one's looking. Then you grab whatever piece you want, Catherine.

[normal volume] Um, this is from Jazz.

"What is the etiquette towards matchmaking friends, other than warning them both beforehand to ensure consent? Is there anything else to know?"

Teresa: [inhales] Oh, gosh.

Travis: I would give the piece of advice of arrange—'cause, listen. I know how middle school this is going to sound, but imagine a thing for people to hang out, and say to them, like, "I think you would get along well."

Teresa: Okay, yes. Because a blind date... oh my gosh. So hard.

Travis: It ain't—it ain't good—like, it's not the—

Teresa: It's not really fun.

Travis: —it's not the best time for someone to shine, right? Because, like, I, for example—I'm at my best when I'm surrounded by people, like, that I know and that I can banter with, and that's when I think I'm most impressive.

And, like, if you... if you like these friends, right? Which I assume you do, 'cause they're your friends, and you want them to shine, right? Put them in a circumstance where they are going to feel most comfortable. I think they're going to feel most comfortable hanging out with people they know.

Teresa: Now, that's not to say that you couldn't have a—a series of different, maybe, spaces or activities where there would be some more int—intimate interaction, instead of just, you know, all round-tabling, you know? So, everyone—

Travis: Like bowling.

Teresa: Like bowling.

Travis: Bowling's a great option.

Teresa: That is a great option.

Travis: Yeah. And here's the thing: I like your impulse, Jazz, which is to tell them what's up.

Teresa: Yeah!

Travis: I think that that is very important, for two reasons. One: it is the right thing to do so that nobody gets, like, put on the spot. But two, then if they go into it with expectations, like, "Hey, I'm gonna set this up, of we're all gonna go

bowling, and I think that you and Todd would get along great." Right? Then they know why you're doing it, and then what's so important, Jazz, is that you don't spend the evening nudging them towards each other.

Teresa: Right, and checking in, and things like that. I think that as a matchmaker here, Jazz, you can... you can put the pieces... together. But you really—you shouldn't force them to fit.

Travis: Think of it more like a scientist, right? Where, like, you're introducing, you know, the—the element into the—into the situation, and then you're watching what happens, right?

Teresa: What kind of—what kind of scientist are you?

Travis: I—in this, I was thinking, like, a chemist.

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: Yeah, where you're mixing the two—something like that. What I was really gonna say, but I didn't wanna gross 'em out, was like it's like a petri dish—

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: —and you're gonna swab their bacteria into a petri dish, and you're gonna watch how it grows, but you don't wanna—

Teresa: Now, see, that's highly scientific.

Travis: I mean, I guess, but it's gross. It's a gross way to think about matchmaking. But yeah. But what you don't want to do is spend the night—there's a great line from a Gary Jules song, which is "Expectation makes me old," and I think about that a lot. 'Cause that idea of, like, if you're trying to push and you're trying to, like—you might end up smothering the flame.

Teresa: That's deep, man.

Travis: Hey, thanks. Um, this question is from Holly.

"What is a polite way to respond to someone who is condescending?"

Teresa: Um...

Travis: This, I think, touches on something that we discuss a lot, which is, one of the things about—when we talk about manners and politeness and etiquette, is we see a lot of questions that are like, "What's a polite way to respond to someone who's yelling at me?" Or "What's a polite way to respond to someone stealing my purse?" or whatever. And I think the fact of the matter is, that's not really, at least in my opinion, how it works. Like, I—here's what I will say. If someone is being condescending to you, and they're doing it... okay.

I'm gonna split this into two categories. If someone, like, is being a jerk to you on purpose and being like, "[sarcastically] Uh, I'm sorry. You—" then I think it's fine to say, like, "Oh, okay. Well, you sound very condescending right now, so I don't wanna continue in this conversation anymore." And then remove yourself from the situation, right? Because if this person's being condescending on purpose and being a jerk, as—I mean, this is assuming that they're not, like, your boss or something, which is a whole different kettle of fish. But if you're just, like, at a bar and someone's kinda being a jerk to you, I think it's okay to say, like, "You're being a little condescending right now, so I think I'm done with this conversation." And walk away.

Teresa: I just want to say that I think that it is important that if you want to keep along the lines of—you said a polite way, is not to call names, and remember the "I" statements, right? So, I don't know if it's deescalating the situation to actually call them condescending? Whereas if you can say, "I don't feel comfortable in this conversation anymore," then you can leave. So I think that that's a very fine line that—a touchstone, there we go. That's a touchstone. "I" statements, and don't call the other person names.

Travis: I think that if it is a situation, though, where this is, like, a loved one, right? Where you don't believe they're doing it intentionally, I think once again "I" statements to say, like, "I want you to know that when you say something like that, it makes me feel like you don't think I know what I'm talking about, or that, like—" uh, yeah. Teresa's giving me a look, 'cause that's not quite an "I" statement, but something along those lines. I don't know, I'm tired, but workshop it.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: But, like, "When you do that, it makes me feel stupid." [laughs quietly]

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Um, but I think it's okay, because here's the thing. If you don't tell someone—the most polite thing you can do in a relationship, be that friendship or coworkers or partners or family or whatever, the most polite thing you can do is talk to the other person and tell them how you feel. Um, because if you don't and instead you just keep that inside, and it builds negative feelings towards the other person because you want them to know how you feel without you telling them...

Teresa: And that can bust out when you least expect it.

Travis: Yeah, so I would say, like—

Teresa: You know, sometimes, Mimi, you're tired at night, and you've been walking around a theme park all day.

Travis: And you have to record a podcast in a closet.

Teresa: [simultaneously] In a closet.

Travis: Yeah, and it gets *real* tense.

Teresa: [laughs quietly]

Travis: But I think it's important, like, in the moment—and trying not to make it, uh, heated in any way. Just say, like, "Hey, I want you to know, um, when you do that, this is how I feel."

Right? And explain that. And it's not like, "Ha, right there, you jerk! You've done it again!"

But more like, "I don't think you know you're doing it, but this is a great example of this thing that I do not enjoy."

Um... let's see. We have one last question. This is from Selena.

"Is it rude to ask if there's going to be food at a party, even if you know the person well?"

I think if you know the person well, it's super not rude.

Teresa: It's super not rude.

Travis: To be like, "Is there gonna be food? Should I bring food? Should I eat beforehand?" Super fine.

Teresa: Um, one of the things that can give you a clue is how close to the usual eating hours is this gathering taking place? Where I would not invite someone to my home between the hours of 6:00 and 7:00 and not provide food and refreshment.

Travis: I would say 6:00 to 8:00, but we're also very old and go to bed at 9:00, so.

Teresa: It's true. So the hour, the dinner hour should be a clue. The lunch hour, again, um, and also I think a good way to ask if there's gonna be food, instead of saying, "Hey. Is there gonna be food?"

That makes it sound like, "I'm just there for the food."

Travis: "Are you gonna feed me?" Yeah.

Teresa: You can say, "What will we be doing? What can I expect from this evening?" Or something like that.

Travis: Right. Or, or you can say, "Should I bring a dish? Should I bring sides, snacks? What kind of things can I provide?"

Teresa: That's a great idea, too.

Travis: And if they're like, "No, I think we're just gonna order pizza." Or, like, "Well, no, I think we're gonna have some chips or whatever." And then you know, like, "Okay. I need to eat beforehand."

Teresa: You know what goin' down.

Travis: But I also think, when it comes right down to it, especially if you are in any way unsure, I think it's important—like, I think it's fine to say, like, "So is this

going to be, like, a dinner thing, or just, like, snacks and appetizers?" Because what you don't wanna do is, like, "Oh, they invited me there at 6:30, so this will be a dinner thing." And then you get there and they have, like, eight cheese cubes. And you're like, "Aw, this sucks." [laughs]

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Like, I think it's okay to ask. I don't think it's rude at all. I think to Teresa's point, you don't wanna make it sound like, "Are you gonna feed me? 'Cause if not, I'm not coming."

Teresa: Right.

Travis: Maybe make the plans first.

Teresa: Or, "I'm just here for the food."

Travis: Yeah. Make the plans first and then say, like, "Sounds great. What are we gonna be doing?"

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: I think that's a great idea. That's gonna do it for us. Uh, real quick, before we let you go, we're gonna be in London on our—[laughs] on our tour of sleepiness.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Um, September 8th, but the show's gonna be great. It's gonna be so good.

Teresa: That show... will not be in a closet.

Travis: No. No. We can guarantee it. It will at least be on a stage. Um, so if you wanna get tickets to that, it's bit.ly/shmannerslondon. Um, and then also, *Shmanners* is going to be taking part in a show we're doing at New York Comic Con on October 6th. It's called *Travis and Friends*. Uh, also there is going to be Janet Varney, Sammus the Rapper, Paul and Storm, Jonathan Coulton, The Doubleclicks, Janet Varney, Pat Rothfuss—

Teresa: You—you said—

Travis: Did I say Janet Varney? She's just so great. Um, Jean Grae, uh...

Teresa: Quelle Chris?

Travis: Quelle Chris. A lot of people are gonna be there. Uh, Miles Luna, Brent Black, Courtney Enlow—

Teresa: Hey, man. A ton of people.

Travis: Yeah. [Bit.ly/mcelroynycc](http://bit.ly/mcelroynycc) for those tickets. Uh, and if you go to mcelroyshows.com/tours, you can find links to all kinds of stuff, including my Dragon Con stuff, which I'm going to be at this weekend. Um, it's also my banner on Twitter right now, so you can go do that.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: And then go check out all the other amazing shows on mcelroyshows.com, and all the other amazing shows on Maximumfun.org. Go check 'em out!

Teresa: Um, as always, we would like to thank Brent "brentalfloss" Black for our theme music, and that is available as a ringtone where those are sold. Um, thank you to Kayla M. Wasil for our Twitter thumbnail art. Thank you to Keely Weis Photography for our banner art, banner picture for the fan-run Facebook group which you can join today, called ma—Shmatters Fanners. And, uh, those—those fans have some really great advice when you need it.

Um, you can follow us on Twitter @shmatterscast.

Travis: And if you have ideas for topics, especially for that London show 'cause we don't know what we're gonna do yet, you can tweet at us @shmatterscast or you can email us, shmatterscast@gmail.com. I think that's it, so join us again next time.

Teresa: No RSVP required.

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

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

[theme music plays]

[chord]

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