

Shmanners 129: Manicures and Pedicures

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Travis: What's the sweetest part of the fingernail?

Teresa: The *cute*-icles!

Travis: It's *Shmanners*!

[theme music plays]

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: I'm doing well! Um, I'm—

Travis: Great!

Teresa: —I'm... [clicks tongue]

Travis: Mm-hmm?

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Ooh, getting introspective!

Teresa: So, the thing that we're talking about is actually a thing that you talk about on Twitter... all the time.

Travis: All the time! Yes. Not all the time. A lot of time.

Teresa: A lot.

Travis: I talk about it on *Instagram* all the time. [laughs]

Teresa: Oh, okay. Sorry about that.

Travis: Um, we are talking about manicures and pedicures. Now, I should say right off the bat, I'm gonna... I'm gonna be transparent with everyone. I have had a lot of manicures in my life. I have never had a pedicure.

Teresa: You know, I was in that boat. I was, for a very long time. Um, because I have very sensitive feet.

Travis: The reason I have not gotten a pedicure—uh, two reasons. One, I almost never wear open-toed shoes or sandals—like, people don't see my feet. Two, I have a thing about doing something I've never done for the first time. And, like, I'm not alone in this.

Teresa: It's hard to just jump in, you know?

Travis: Right. There's something about—if I don't know the ins and outs of the process, if I'm not comfortable with the process, it's really hard for me to do something for the first time.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: Um, then once I've done it once, it's like, "Oh, okay. Let's do this." Right?

Teresa: I think that one of the pearls of wisdom that you give often [clears throat] is that you say, "This can't be the first time this has happened to someone."

Travis: Yes, absolutely.

Teresa: So, like, the manicurist and pedicurist, the salon employee, has done this so many times, and has had so many people in their chair for the first time that it really—it's—it's staggering, I think. [laughs quietly]

Travis: Yeah. So at this point, I would say that the thing stopping me from getting a pedicure—it is at this point not reluctance or anything like that. It's just, like, I'm waitin' for an occasion, you know?

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: Like, we'll be somewhere, we'll go on vacation or we'll travel for tour or something, and we'll be somewhere that has, like, a spa or something. And I'll be like, "Oh, okay. Now."

But like I said, like, I never wear shoes where people would see my toes, so I just never think about doing it. Whereas a manicure, I tend to do those—well, now at home for myself a lot more. But, like, any time I'm doing a live show, or an appearance, or anything like that.

Um, and frankly, I love them. And can I tell you why, Teresa?

Teresa: Why?

Travis: I love—I love—

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: —um, the process of making the decision of, like, "I am doing this... for myself." It's—it's—it's a double benefit.

Teresa: Okay. Okay.

Travis: One, I like to make myself feel worth it.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: And two, it feels like, uh, ar—like putting on your armor, right? Sharpening your sword.

Teresa: Yeah!

Travis: That's all very aggressive. But, like, it reminds me of when I grew up doing theater, and, like, when it was time for the show, you know, you sit in front

of the mirror and you do your stage makeup and you're getting in costume, right? That's how I feel getting ready for live shows, or getting ready for appearances or conventions, right? Like, this is my getting ready. This is me preparing for this. And, like, that's—it's just part of my process at this point.

Teresa: Yeah! I totally get that. There is something so satisfying as to be completely put together, and ready for the thing that you're doing.

Travis: Um, I will also say, I like getting compliments on it.

Teresa: [laughs] Well, here's the heart. Here's the heart. [laughs]

Travis: Well, can I tell you my favorite story about this? Um, so I was getting ready of the premier of the *My Brother, My Brother, and Me* TV show, right? In New York. And so, you know, I was getting my hair cut and I was getting a manicure. And it was, like, two or three days before the premier.

And this older lady walked by and put her hand on my shoulder, and she said, "Congratulations. Good for you."

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: She walked away and I thought, "How does she know I have a TV show coming out?!"

Teresa: [laughs loudly]

Travis: And it wasn't until later that I realized she was like, "Oh, this brave young man, comfortable enough to get his fingernails painted." [laughs] And, like, that just did not occur to me whatsoever. I was just like, "Aw, yeah, my TV show! Thank you very much."

Teresa: Oh yeah, oh yeah.

Travis: "I'm very proud of it, too! Thank you! I hope you like it! It's on Seeso! There's a scene where I touch a spider!"

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Um... so, let's talk about manicures and pedicures.

Teresa: Yeah!

Travis: But first, let's talk a little bit about the history.

Teresa: So... like a lot of stuff, people all around the world have been taking care of their fingertips.

Travis: Is this the kind of thing where, like... I could see this being a thing of, like, it began independently in a lot of different places instead of being able to pinpoint to, like, one region.

Teresa: Indeed.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: So, lots of origin stories. The Greeks have their own origin story where Eros was considered to be the first manicurist. Um, and—

Travis: Wait, Eros?

Teresa: Eros, mm-hmm.

Travis: Like E-R-O-S?

Teresa: Yeah!

Travis: Like Cupid.

Teresa: Sure, yeah.

Travis: Okay. But like Roman Cupid, right? Or Greek Cupid?

Teresa: Greek Cupid is Eros.

Travis: Right, okay.

Teresa: It's said that he's the first manicurist because in the mythology, he cuts Aphrodite's fingernails while she's asleep, and then throws the clippings onto the beach, where they turn into precious gems.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: I think that's pretty cool.

Travis: That is pretty cool, but I've thrown my nail clippings around a lot of places—

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: —and that's never happened for me.

Teresa: Yeah. Um, also, this can be pinpointed back to ancient China as well. As you were talking about, how there's a lot of different kind of points of origin. Um—

Travis: 'Cause it seems like a lot, like, makeup and, like, clothes, right? It seems like I can logically see how a lot of different people would come to it without having to see someone else do it and be like, "Oh, okay. That's—" you know what I mean? Like...

Teresa: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm.

Travis: It doesn't quite seem like an invention to me so much as it's a logical progression of, like, "Well, we—we put makeup on the face. Maybe we can put it on—" so, like, I can see how it would begin in a bunch of places.

Teresa: And then from ancient China, wherein they used things like egg whites and gelatin and beeswax, sometimes even crushed flower petals for color. Um, I mean, that wouldn't lend a ton of color. More like tint, right?

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Um, it is said to have then traveled through trade routes, through Mesopotamia, and Babylon, and Egypt, and eventually to Italy, again. Um, and a lot of these places...

Travis: Did you hear about the ancient culture that wouldn't stop talking?

Teresa: No?

Travis: It would just Babylon. [play on "babble on"]

Teresa: Eh, nah, nah, nah.

Travis: Hey, I'm a dad now! Okay, go on.

Teresa: The... the color of your fingernails and the general kempt-ness of your fingernails was related to social status, and I think that—

Travis: Yeah, totally makes sense.

Teresa: —that completely makes sense. Even in some places, uh, the highest of the social elite were encouraged to grow their fingernails to enormous lengths to again symbolize their—their, you know... sort of, um... you know, they weren't laborers. Right?

Travis: Right. Like, I would say that that kind of de facto still occurs? Like, I—I—the first time I painted my fingernails, I was still working as the technical director at Cincy Shakes. And, like, I couldn't do it on a regular basis because I was doing stuff that was, like, breaking my nails and would scrape it right off if I did it. So I didn't really start doing manicures until I quit that and went into, like, full time podcasting, which—and this might shock some people—is far less physically labor-intensive.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: I'm not, like, lifting heavy audio tracks to put 'em in place, so I'm able to do my nails a lot more.

Teresa: Yes. Um, so these—the nails of, like I said, the Chinese noblemen and such, often were even, like, cast in gold to protect them. I think that's really cool. So, like, you know how you would—you would cast a kind of mold, right? And then you would—it looks almost like little—like little slip-on shoes, little slippers.

Travis: [gasps quietly] Like caps! Like you would put on a cat's claws.

Teresa: Yeah! Yeah. [laughs] That's a better visual, isn't it? Uh, for the nails.

Travis: I don't know, I think you were doing a great job.

Teresa: Oh, thanks. With my little finger slippers? [laughs]

Travis: Well, it's just hard, because you were doing very descriptive hand motions... that I feel like people at home couldn't see through the microphone.

Teresa: Right. Right.

Travis: Um, but you did—you did say one thing that I do want to touch on, which is for, I would say, most of history, I'm going to assume, but I'm pretty sure I'm right, that this was not a, well, "Female people paint their—and male people don't."

Teresa: Correct.

Travis: Like, this was—

Teresa: It was all status.

Travis: Women and men, and everyone, painted their nails if they had the status to do it.

Teresa: Right.

Travis: Yeah. That's the thing, man.

Teresa: Same thing in ancient Egypt, all the pharaohs. Females and males.

Travis: It's the same with, like, makeup and, like, lace, and peacocking and, like... you know, fancy ruffled things and, like, nice... [sighs]

Teresa: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm.

Travis: It wasn't until, like, the 1930's and 40's that this, like, "[gruff voice] Men are men, and [unintelligible grumbling]."

Teresa: Stop—stop hitting the desk.

Travis: I know! I just hate that stuff so much.

Teresa: You're so emphatic. Um, so then if we speed up to, like, the 20th century, um... we've got, like, the—I should actually say the 19th century. Um, nails are mentioned in etiquette guides from the 1800's. Um, and like a lot of things, you were supposed to put in a lot of effort, but not make it look like you had the effort. Like, you know, the no-makeup makeup look? And that was—

Travis: So this was probably a lot of, like, clear varnish, and a lot of, like—

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Well, you were supposed to use a little lemon juice and vinegar to whiten the nail tips, right? So you could kind of, like, buff them, right? And shine them up, and then they were just supposed to be—they were supposed to look pristine, but not look like you'd done anything to it?

Travis: "Oh, what, these?"

Teresa: "Oh, but these?"

Travis: "Oh, I mean, I guess they do look very healthy, yeah!"

Teresa: And this was when... like, the makeup industry, the commercialism started happening with things like polishers, buffers, crystal stones, Emory boards, hand and cuticle creams. Like, it was all part of this, like, taking care of your nails. But again, you had to have money, right? If you wanted to look like you hadn't done anything to your nails, you had to spend a lot of money doing stuff to your nails. [laughs quietly]

Travis: So—so when did that change? When did it—when did it become, like, "Hey, you can go to the drugstore and buy a bottle and do it at home for yourself for, like, three bucks."

Teresa: The 1920's.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Um, which was when car paint gave the basis for colored nail enamels!

Travis: [gasps] What?

Teresa: Yeah!

Travis: What? Wow!

Teresa: Isn't that cool?

Travis: That *is* cool!

Teresa: Um, and so—

Travis: It is a shame that that happened right around the exact same time it became quote, unquote, "weird" for guys to do it.

Teresa: Yeah. Well, guys in Hollywood were always doing it.

Travis: Right?

Teresa: I mean, natural-looking nails, again. They weren't encouraged for other colors, but—

Travis: It just seems like such a great tie-in if you were like, "Paint your car, and paint your nail—" like—[sighs]

Teresa: Such a missed opportunity, huh?

Travis: Yes! Yes!

Teresa: Um, but there were really only a few colors to choose from. Again, they were marketed mostly towards women. Reds, pinks, and anything really too... bright, or dark, was kind of frowned upon.

Travis: Because it was... too scintillating?

Teresa: Yes. Well, you know, those flapper girls.

Travis: Oh, sure.

Teresa: I don't know. Did flappers paint their nails?

Travis: [stammers] Probably?

Teresa: Probably. So then once we go up to the 50's, a lot of more colors were introduced. Um, and this is when the salon kind of atmosphere really started to diverge, whereas before you would probably have a manicurist come to your home, right? Now, hairdressers and salons were starting to offer the service.

Um, and then in 70's, there was the acrylic nail, which could build a nail where there wasn't a nail, right?

Travis: Is that—I've never done the, like, uh, you know, kind of press-on acrylic nails. Is that in any way, like, damaging to the nail underneath?

Teresa: You know, I am not a nail tech. So I don't know the specifics. I do know that some, um, types of fingernail adornment are deemed better for your nails. Some are deemed worse. Um, there's a kind of debate on the internet as to whether or not nails, quote, "breathe."

Travis: Yeah, I was gonna say, I've seen a lot of people make some really good points that, "No, of course they don't." [laughs] Because that's—they're—that's like saying your hair breathes. But I also maybe—I think it is possible for nails to dry out? I don't know. I don't know—I'm not—

Teresa: You know, I don't—like I said, I'm not a nail tech. Um, but I do agree that having your nails constantly buffed, um, can damage the nail surface, thin it out. Um, and also, some of the chemicals that we use in removing nail polish and other sorts of acrylic stuff, those are also damaging.

Travis: I will say, this is another thing, too, just as long as we're touch on this. Don't, uh, like, sand your nail to put nail polish on it. One, you don't need to do that. And two, it's very damaging. Like, you don't have enough bumps and lumps or whatever on your nail that it's gonna mess up your nail polish, and it doesn't make it stick better or anything like that. You're just—don't—don't sand the top of your nails. That doesn't—don't—no. Don't do that.

Teresa: Okay. Um, so here's one of the things that I definitely wanna touch on as far as, like, modern manicures go. Um, it doesn't—it doesn't take a lot of looking around to find a salon that is owned and operated by mainly Vietnamese-descended people.

Travis: People of Vietnamese descent, yes.

Teresa: Sure. Um, and there is a reason for that. So, Tippi Hedren visited a Vietnamese refugee camp in California 40 to 50 years ago. And when she was there, there was a lot of talk by the women of the camp about her long, polished fingernails.

It seems that they were quite a sight, and what she did was she flew in her personal manicurist to teach a group of 20 refugees the art of manicures. These were mostly women, and they were mostly the wives of high-ranking military officers. Um, and what happened from that is this entire kind of lineage of people, the original, like, 20 people from that camp who have gone on to corner the industry. And it's amazing, um, because the industry now is worth about 8 billion dollars.

And, like I said, it's dominated by Vietnamese-Americans. Um, and the whole thing is, like—so, Tippi Hedren was really trying to help these women make, you know—make their way for themselves, you know? And so she brought in seamstresses and typists, and anything. She brought in a ton of professionals in order to almost make a school for them, and the thing that everyone kept coming back to is they wanted to do nails.

Travis: Well, that's super cool.

Teresa: Yeah, it is! And Tippi Hedren helped them get jobs all over Southern California. Um, and there's a really cool museum that she has, which is—well, I mean, it's on her property, next to her home. Um, which includes her Hollywood memorabilia, and some of these photos of the women at Camp Hope! Um, and the awards that she's been given, right? It's pretty cool.

Travis: Um, so before we go into questions and thank you notes, I want to say that these days, another—like, here's the thing. I feel like you have less and less excuse to not do your nails, if you want to. Um, no matter where you fall on the gender spectrum, on the gender... wheel? The gender "Hmm?" The gender universe, I'm gonna go with that.

Teresa: Alright.

Travis: No matter where—no matter where you are in the gender universe, because it's—especially now with, like, nail art, nail stickers, nail decals, and there are also these, like—they're basically, like, nail stickers, but they're actual polish.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: So, like, they stick on, and then you take 'em off with regular nail polish. You can do it in, like, ten minutes. And, like, it takes almost no expertise or skill.

Teresa: I did it in the car this weekend. [laughs]

Travis: Yeah. I—I—literally, I can do it while, like, on a phone call. You know what I mean? I can do it while—I've done it while recording podcasts.

Teresa: [laughs] So if you wanna, you should do it!

Travis: And I'm gonna do a little plug here, except it's not for me. Um, if you go to Espionage Cosmetics, and there's a link that *Shmanners*—we will tweet out, and use the coupon code "fantaztic," like TAZ, *The Adventure Zone*—so F-A-N-T-A-Z-T-I-C, um, you will get 18 percent off orders of 15 dollars or more, and a percentage of your order goes to The Trevor Project, where I'm partnering with Espionage Cosmetics to raise money for The Trevor Project. I make no money off of this, so let me be clear. This is not for me at all. And it's completely coincidental that I'm doing this thing, and we're doing an episode about nails.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: I'm just letting you know. So if you want to save 18 percent on your order of 15 dollars or more, like I said, I will tweet the link to click on from *Shmanners*, and you will use the coupon code "fantaztic." Um, so go check that out. And, yeah! Um, speaking of sponsors and stuff, let's do some thank you notes.

[music plays]

Teresa: *Shmanners* this week is sponsored in part by Sunbasket! Sunbasket delivers delicious meal kits right to your door, making healthy cooking easy and convenient for any busy lifestyle. They have really fresh, really great, um, a lot of organic produce delivered to your door, and the great thing about this meal

delivery service is they have 18 healthy options to choose from, which include things like paleo, gluten free, a line they call "lean and clean," and even vegan dinners!

Travis: Last night for dinner, we had a simple sole and farro salad. And it was sole poached in, like, milk and basil and lemon zest with, like, a lemon juice and olive oil, uh, like, drizzle over a kale salad with grapes and farro and olives. It was amazing. And, can I tell you? Bebe *loved* it.

Teresa: She sure did.

Travis: She was slamming it.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: And—yeah. It's really good food. Um—

Teresa: And it's really easy to make, because it all comes—so, all the ingredients except for any protein come in its own little paper bag that can be recycled, and they're all together. There's no, like, digging through your drawer. You take the bag out, you get your olive oil, your salt and pepper, and you're there. I mean, you have to defrost [unintelligible] a protein, 'cause we usually freeze [crosstalk]—

Travis: And you have to, like, make it. Don't eat the raw food, please!

Teresa: I—[laughs] some of it's raw, though.

Travis: That's true.

Teresa: Some of it's good—good raw.

Travis: That's true.

Teresa: Um, and like I said, they have all of these really great meals. Gluten, lean and clean, vegan, Mediterranean, family options, all this stuff. And they're each ready in about 30 minutes. So, you can have a home-cooked meal, cooked in your home, in less than an hour! Fantastic.

So, you should go to sunbasket.com/shmanners, and you can get 35 dollars off your first order. Again, sunbasket.com/shmanners, get that 35 dollars off at sunbasket.com/S-H-M-A-N-N-E-R-S.

Travis: Teresa, can I tell you about a website I made?

Teresa: Please do!

Travis: I made a website called buttercupisaverygoodgirl.com. And on it—

Teresa: You—

Travis: What?

Teresa: You did?

Travis: I did, and I'm just realizing now I haven't told you about this. But it's a slideshow of pictures of Buttercup that people can go and look at.

Teresa: Wait a second.

Travis: Yeah. buttercupisaverygoodgirl.com.

Teresa: Uh-huh.

Travis: Um, it's got an FAQ on there, it has an About Buttercup section. There's a game section that Griffin maybe put on there, but there's not ever gonna be any games on there.

Um, and it's just a little slideshow of pictures of Buttercup.

Teresa: [emphatically] OMG! [laughs]

Travis: Yeah, I told you! That you can go and look at and see how cute Buttercup is.

Teresa: Aww! So nice.

Travis: Right? It's great. And here's the thing: I built it with Squarespace. It took me about 15 minutes. Um, and—

Teresa: Aww, that's our little pictures of us—that's—aww!

Travis: Yeah, it's so cute! I know! It's a very—it is a very good website, and Buttercup is a very good girl dot com. Um, so on Squarespace, you can showcase your work, you can blog or publish content, you can announce an upcoming event or special project, and more.

For example, you can build a fan site to your dog—

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: —if you want to. Um, it has beautiful, customizable templates created by world class designers, powerful ecommerce functionality that lets you sell anything online, everything optimized for mobile right out of the box, and a new way to buy domains and choose from over 200 extensions. It's free and secure hosting, so you don't have to worry about a thing. Teresa, tell me how you feel about buttercupisaverygoodgirl.com.

Teresa: This is the rest of my day! Oh my God!

Travis: Yeah? Did you check out the FAQ?

Teresa: Oh, no, I haven't!

Travis: Go to the Frequently Asked Questions section.

Teresa: Okay. Okay. [laughs]

Travis: Will you read them out loud, please?

Teresa: It says, "Who's a good girl? Good question! Buttercup is a good girl. [emphatically] Who's a good girl? [normal tone] Well, as I said before, Buttercup is a good girl. Is Buttercup a good girl? Yes, she is! Yes, she is! Yes, she is!"

Travis: There you go. So if you want to build your own fan site to your dog, you can go to Squarespace.com/shmanners, that's S-H-M-A-N-N-E-R-S, for a free trial, and when you're ready to launch use the offer code "shmanners" to save 10 percent off your first purchase of a website or domain. Check it out, and make your own buttercupisaverygoodgirl.com.

[*Star Trek* comm noise]

Adam: Beloved Maximum Fun *Star Trek* podcast *The Greatest Generation* is going out on tour.

Ben: We are bringing Greatest Gen Khan [air horn noise] to a bunch of cities in the US and Canada. It's our big tribute to/send up of *Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan*. And we have a big leg coming up. [snorts]

Adam: Yes, we are raising our legs on a number of cities—

Ben: [laughs]

Adam: —in the coming weeks.

Ben: We're going to Washington, DC on August 23rd; The Bell House in Brooklyn, New York on August 24th; MASS MoCA in North Adams, Massachusetts on August 25th; Pittsburgh on the 28th; Boston, Massachusetts at the Wilbur Theater on the 29th; Atlanta, Georgia at The Earl on the 30th; Ferndale, Michigan at The Magic Bag on the 31st.

Adam: Those are some great big rooms, and some great big cities, Ben.

Ben: And it's a really fun show. It's accessible, even if you haven't listened to the podcast yet.

Adam: We can't wait to see you when we're out on tour. Check greatestgenkhan.com for dates and ticketing information.

Ben: And Khan is spelled K-H-A-N because *Wrath of Khan*. Greatestgenkhan.com.

[*Star Trek* comm noise]

[crosstalk from multiple people]

Speaker One: These are real podcast listeners, not actors.

[crosstalk from multiple people]

Speaker One: Hey, thanks for coming! Here's a list of descriptors. What would you choose to describe the perfect podcast?

Speaker Two: I mean, vulgarity.

Speaker Three: Dumb. Definitely dumb.

Speaker Four: And, like, uh... right here, this one. Meritless.

Speaker One: What if I told you there was a podcast that *did* have all of that?

Speaker Two: [gasps]

Speaker Three: No.

Speaker One: *Jordan, Jesse, Go!* And it's free.

Group: *Jordan, Jesse, Go?*

[applause]

Speaker Four: [whispering] *Jordan, Jesse, Go!*

Speaker One: *Jordan, Jesse, Go!* A real podcast.

[music and ad play and end]

Teresa: [laughs] That's amazing!

Travis: Yeah, I thought you would like that. Um, so we have some questions here. Um, let's see. This is from Anna.

"I dislike when the person doing my nails cuts my cuticles. How do I go about asking them nicely not to cut my cuticles without sounding rude?"

[pause]

Teresa: This is a problem—well, no, this is a question we encounter all the time. Asking for what you want in a clear and concise way is not rude.

Travis: Especially—especially with stuff like this, where this is a service industry, right? Where, like, they want to give you the experience that you want, you know what I mean?

Teresa: Exactly.

Travis: It's like getting a haircut, right?

Teresa: And they would rather that you—that you say something and come back than not say anything and—and, like—and tell all your friends that it was a terrible experience.

Travis: Right. Like—like I said, a haircut, right? You wouldn't—if you said, "I don't want them to give me bangs," you would feel comfortable saying that, right?

Teresa: Right!

Travis: You wouldn't be like, "How do I say... " just say, like, "Uh, and if you could not cut the cuticles, thank you very much."

Teresa: I mean, you can even just say, "Don't trim my cuticles today, please."

Travis: Yeah. Um—

Teresa: Done.

Travis: This question is from... Stasa. Sure.

"Um, tipping?! Please advise."

Teresa: Yes. Like you just said, this is a service industry, and so within the service industry in the United States, tipping is usually 15 to 20 percent, and I would suggest that you do just a touch of research, figure out how much the service you are going to buy is, how much a 20 percent tip is ahead of time, and make it easy on yourself and have that in cash. Um, because a lot of places don't take credit card tip.

Travis: Um, and I would say that this also is some—results may vary depending on your location. Like, here in the US, tipping—if the question is, "Do I tip?" The answer is probably "Yes." Like, 99 percent of the time. But that's not always true

in other countries. So, especially if you're going to visit someplace, um, I think it's always safe to google, "Do I tip a manicurist or pedicurist in," blank, whatever country you're going to visit.

Teresa: I would also say that if you are getting this service done in, like, a hotel spa atmosphere, um, you can ask the concierge, you can—you can pretty much bet that if it is an English-speaking hotel in another country, you are probably expected to tip.

Travis: This question is from Silly Soul.

"Many pedicure places have lovely people who want to engage in small talk, but I always sort of just want to zone out, read books, or listen to podcasts. How do I politely signal that I don't want to converse, or am I in the wrong?"

Teresa: I think you are perfectly within your rights to experience your pampering however you'd like to experience. I would say that it's a little easier to do your own thing with your book or your magazine or your podcast when you're getting a pedicure, because you are sitting in a chair that's usually a little elevated, and the nail tech is at your feet instead of right in front of your face, um, so with a manicure, I would suggest that you kind of bite the bullet a little bit and exchange the pleasantries, but as long—like, as long as you're kind, I don't think that you have to ask about their life.

You don't have to divulge any kind of, like, intimate details. Just the pleasantries are fine when you're getting your nails done, and if you're listening to your podcast, um, I suggest that you don't have the volume so high that you can't hear what the nail tech is saying, because—

Travis: Or you do, like, one ear on, one ear off, yeah.

Teresa: Yeah, one ear off, or something like that. Because they're probably asking you things that have to do with the service.

Travis: Yeah. I would say that if you—if it would make you feel more comfortable, this is what I would do. I would, one, speak in statement, and then ask questions. So I would say, like, "I am going to finish listening to my podcast. Is that alright?"

Or, like, "I'm right in the middle of this chapter. Would it be alright if I read my book?"

You know what I mean?

Teresa: Sure.

Travis: And the answer is probably going to be, "Yes." And, you know, at worst, if it is for some reason uncomfortable, don't go back to that person. You know what I mean? Like, you're not locked in to going to this manicurist or pedicurist every time. And once you find somebody that you like, and that, you know, kind of matches your vibe, go back to that person.

I have a person that I kind of stumbled upon at the salon that I go to who I really like, and so she is who I go to whenever I need to stun, because I already know what her energy is, and I know that it matches well with my energy.

Um, this question is from Sadie.

"So, I have bad hearing and trouble understanding words in many settings, but this problem is especially prominent in a salon. I know this is a me problem, not a them problem, but how do I explain that I can't understand them without coming off like criticism or xenophobia?"

And I will say, Sadie, I have this problem as well. Um, I can't understand accents of any kind. Like, we went to Scotland—

Teresa: It was very funny when people would speak to Travis's face, and he would turn to me, and I would answer the person who was speaking to Travis. [laughs]

Travis: Like, I have problems with every—every accent I've ever heard, I have to say, "Excuse me?" [laughs]

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Like, I'm—and I think it's because in general I am a terrible listener, and not that accents are hard to understand, but that in real life, I only listen to about every other word that anyone says.

Teresa: He kinda just gives up, I think.

Travis: Yeah, very much so. Um, so I think that for me personally, part of it is, like, listening. Um, also, saying "Excuse me." Like, "Excuse me? What is it?"

And, a li—okay. Here's the two things that I will say. One, context clues. Um, but also, two, the more I get a manicure done, the more I do it, you understand the process and the steps that you're at, you know what I mean? And it's like, "Okay, cool, yes, I know what this—I know what you're asking me."

Teresa: Oh, so you can kind of guess at what they've said.

Travis: Right.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: Um... [sighs] so, one, I think it's okay to say "Excuse me" and have 'em repeat. And two, I would suggest answering in complete sentences, and not just saying "Yes," or "No." But saying, like, "This is the color I would like." And if that's not the answer they were looking for, not the question they were asking, they will ask again. You know what I mean? So that way you make sure that there's no misunderstanding.

Teresa: I would also say that you are not the first person to walk into a salon and have difficulty hearing, and I think that you can say, without lying, that you have trouble hearing. You have hearing difficulties. And I think that that's—that's perfectly fine, and when you make people aware of your situation, then they can help you.

Travis: I will also say that for me, I have also found that a smaller spa experience, a smaller salon experience—'cause there's places here in Cincinnati where it's, like, kind of mega salons, you know?

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: You go, and then there's, like, 40 tables set up, and yeah, in there I can't understand any—I can't hear Teresa at that point. Like, I'm very bad at discerning individual voices in general. Um, and so, like, going to someplace where it's one-on-one, or there's, like, a smaller number of tables operating, I have found that is better for me, for my experience.

I mean, and that's the thing. Once again, it's a service industry. And so, like, you're going for your experience. So, like, find the experience that is best for you, you know what I mean? And then go with that.

Um, this is from Caitlin.

"When is it too late to tell the manicurist you don't like the nail color?"

Teresa: Um, I believe that it is too late once the manicurist has finished one hand.

Travis: See, I would say that if you're unsure of the color, like, it's a color you haven't done before—or even if you're, like, only 95 percent sure, I would say before they even start, like, "Could I see what this looks like?"

And they'll probably do, like, one nail, right?

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: And then you can say, like, "Oh, yeah, I love that," right? And they'll do the rest of them. But I think you are right, because a lot of the times they'll do, like, one coat, and then move on to the other hand, and then move back to the first hand. And so once that one coat is done and you're like, "You know, I thought this was gonna be bluer. Um, is there any way that we could try something else?" Right?

Teresa: Certainly.

Travis: And if you do that, I also think it's important—in your head just, like, tick up the tip a little bit, you know?

Teresa: Sure.

Travis: Of, like, "I made them do extra work." Um, this is from Shark Witchy.

"Is it actually okay to bring your own color, or a picture of what you want?"

Teresa: Picture of what you want certainly is okay. Um, I often request a half moon manicure, because, I mean, I like that aesthetic.

Travis: 'Cause you like it.

Teresa: 'Cause I like it. Um, and I sometimes have difficulty explaining what it is. So, with a picture on my phone, show the picture, I say, "I'd like this, please." And they go, "Can do." Right?

Um, bringing your own color I think really varies on salon, but the worst that they can say is "No."

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: And you put it in your bag, you know? So take it with you and say, "Can you use this?" And if they say "No," you're like, "Alright, I'll choose a different one."

Travis: Right. And at the very least if you bring it, then say, "Do you have a color like this?" Right?

Teresa: Certainly.

Travis: And then you can match that. But once again, this helps that I have now built a relationship with the person I go to that, like, I feel comfortable bringing in my own stuff. One, because she's done it before, so I know she doesn't have a problem with it, and two, I know that if she didn't wanna use it or whatever, I would trust her, and understand what—you know, why she didn't wanna do it, or whatever. So, like, sure, whatever.

Um, so this is from Andy.

"I have never been for one, but I'm interested, but I'm not really sure where to start or what to ask, particularly as a big hairy man living in his second language. So, where do I start?"

Teresa: Um, well, the first place I would start is to go on an off time. Um, so not after work, not during the weekends. Um, because you're more likely to have an empty salon, and someone who won't mind walking you through it, because you're the only person there, and so there's no, like, time crunch. If you—if you can't make it at an off time, I would say make an appointment. A lot of these places do walk-ins, but they also do appointments, and you can say, "This is my

first time. You might have to do a little extra as far as, like, trimmin' 'em up, so, you know, I need—I need a full appointment."

And generally, pedicures take about an hour, a little less, and manicures about a half an hour. So, plan that time, and I think that that will help.

Travis: And plan after time.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: 'Cause it'll take a half an hour, and then you want, like, a half hour of drying time, right? So what I do is I book my manicure appointments, and then right after that a haircut, so I can sit there underneath the cape, right? With my hands on my lap with the nails drying when I get my haircut done, so that way I don't have to worry about messing it up, getting in the car, whatever, you know?

Teresa: Yeah, sounds great.

Travis: Um, but I would also say, another piece of advice is, Andy, if you can find a friend who has done manicures before and, like, some place that they like, um—

Teresa: Yeah, get good recommendations.

Travis: Yeah, go with them. And, like—because here's the thing. I'm always more comfortable doing something for the first time with someone who's done it before.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: You know? So, like, find somebody to go with you. And here's the thing. This is something that I will—like, do as I say, not as I do, kind of thing.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Where it's like, you know, it's only your first time once, and then after that, you've done it before and you don't have to worry about it.

Teresa: Yep.

Travis: So, like, that first time might be uncomfortable, and you might be confused, and you might, like, feel out of place, and you might feel—but, like, then the second time you do it and the third you do it and the fourth—and pretty soon, you're just a person who does it. 'Cause this was a thing—this—there's another question here from John, which is:

"How do I, a guy, get comfortable with this? Gone with my wife multiple times, frequently feeling on edge the whole time."

And so here's the thing I will say. When I started painting my fingernails, I was so ready for somebody to treat it like an affectation, you know? Like, "Why are you—what are you trying to pro—why are you doing that? Like, are you just trying to get compliments so you don't—"

But here's the thing. Everybody wears nail polish I think for the same reason, 'cause they think it looks good.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: Right? And so the answer to both of these, like, how do you feel like you belong? You *do* belong, because you're there, because you went and you're doing it. Like, you're doing it and that's... like—

Teresa: That's it. That's all you have to do.

Travis: You're not gonna get kicked out. They're not gonna be like, "[accusingly] Wait. Why are you pretending like you're a person who gets your nails—"

Like, you are there, and you're paying them to do it, so you are.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: And, like, you don't need to wait for someone's permission to get it done, because you're doing it for you, and 'cause you think it looks good. And, like, looking good knows no gender.

Um, let me see. One more question. Okay. This is something that I have dealt with many times. Mitch asks:

"Do I wait for the person to tell me to leave, or do I leave when I feel like my toenails are dry enough? I never know when to leave when I'm sitting at the drying station."

Yes. Yes, yes. Yes, yes, yes.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: I know this feeling very much.

Teresa: Okay. Um, so once you leave the manicurist chair or the pedicure station, like, they don't care about you anymore.

Travis: You're done.

Teresa: You're done. You can stay at that drying station as long as you want, and I recommend that you stay there for 20 minutes. Park it, because you paid for these beautiful nails, and if you mess them up on the drive home, you're gonna be sad.

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: So, they don't—like... someone might come by and ask if you're doing okay, and people do that so that *you* feel better. They don't care about you anymore.

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: They're on to the next person, so stay there as long as you want. Um, and if you stay less than ten minutes, I'm afraid that you are going to be sad, because you are going to nick your—[laughs] nick your nails.

Travis: And let me give you—okay. This is some good general advice. One: if you can, pay ahead of time.

Teresa: I mean, yes. And a lot of—a lot of good nail techs will ask you before they put the polish on to get out your money now.

Travis: Right. And so especially since I go to the same place every time, I like to go ahead and prepay, so I don't have to worry about fumbling with my wallet,

reaching into my pocket, or anything like that, right? Pay, and I'm done. I can walk out.

Um, two, if you are parked at a parking meter, make sure that there is enough time on the meter when you go in, so you don't have to, like, fish in your pocket for quarters or anything like that.

Two, have your keys out of your pocket or your purse or your jacket or whatever with you ready to go. Like, all of these things, because your nails will dry, but that's not the same as them being cured.

Teresa: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm, mm-hmm.

Travis: And so it'll be dry to the touch, right? Where you can touch 'em and they're not tacky, but if something scrapes along it, it'll still, like, dig a line into it, right?

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: Or tear a chunk out of it.

Teresa: So take your time at that dry bar. Do you need to, like... like I said, once you're out of their chair, they don't care about you.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: And, like, as long as—

Travis: Which is wonderfully freeing!

Teresa: [laughs] As long as the whole place isn't super crowded, you can, you know, put your bag or your jacket or whatever you brought on your lap so that you're not taking the room on the bar for other people, and chill. You deserve this time. Take all the time you need.

Travis: And, in fact, I would say that it is—if you can help it, don't plan something right after. And, like, if there's like a bar next door, or a restaurant, or a library, or a movie theater, you know what I mean? Like... do it, and then do something afterwards that doesn't take you walking around or using your hands or whatever, and just make a day of it!

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Treat yourself! Um... okay. So, that's gonna do it for us. Thank you so much. Um, let's see. There's so many other amazing shows on Maximumfun.org. You should go check them all out. I also have a new show that I just started with my friends Amy Dallen and Erika Ishii. And it's called *Positiviteeny*, and you can find *Positiviteeny*, which is like positivity but E-E-N-Y at the end.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Um, and you can find it on iTunes, it's on Pocket Cast, it's—

Teresa: And these are minisodes, right?

Travis: Yes. So it's messages of hope, inspiration, and... positivity, uh, in ten minutes or less, every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. Our first episode was called "What is Positivity?" And our next episode coming out Wednesday is called "Picking Your Battles." Uh, so check that out. Um, also, real quick... [breathes deeply] I'm going to be at Dragon Con, um, doing photo ops, and you can find tickets to that at mcelroyshows.com/tours. We are going to be in London on September 8th. We're super excited.

Teresa: Wee!

Travis: It's our first time. We're going to do—the first half of the show will be, you know, a topic, and then the second half of the show will be, like, audience questions for specific advice. Um, you can get tickets for that at bit.ly/shmannerslondon. Tickets—

Teresa: And if you will be there, please submit your topic ideas.

Travis: Yeah! That would be great.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Tickets for that are going really fast. Uh, there's only about, I think, like, 40 seats left. So, if you wanna come to that, get your tickets now. Bit.ly/shmannerslondon.

Um, I am also doing another Cincinnati Underground Society Show here in Cincinnati on September 23rd. The lineup is bonkers incredible. You can get those tickets at bit.ly/cusseptember2018. Um, and also, we are doing a *Shmanners* show along with *Travis and Friends* which is, like, at this point 15 amazing people.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Uh, at New York Comic Con. Um, you can get tickets for that, bit.ly/mcelroynycc. That's going to be October 6th. Once again, trust me, the lineup... is bonkers incredible.

And, uh, just go to mcelroyshows.com/tours. There's links to everything there, including a *Sawbones* book tour event that you should get tickets to in October. Uh—

Teresa: [gasps] Will you put Buttercup's thing on there? Will you put a link?

Travis: Will I put Butter—no. Just go to buttercupisaverygoodgirl.com.

Teresa: Oh, okay, alright. [laughs]

Travis: Um, let's see what else. What else do we normally say here, Teresa?

Teresa: Well, we always thank Brent "brentalfloss" Black for writing our theme music, and that's available as a ringtone where those are sold. We thank Kayla M. Wasil for our Twitter thumbnail art. Go check out her portfolio. It's very good.

And we also like to thank Keely Weis Photography for the cover—no, the banner picture of the fan-run Facebook group. And I just wanna say that those fans to a really great job, um, all—you know, giving good advice when advice is asked for. And you should join that, because it's fun.

Travis: Uh, so that's gonna do it for us. Join us again next time!

Teresa: No RSVP required.

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

Teresa: Manners, *Shmanners*. Get it?

[theme music plays]

[chord]

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