

Shmanners 353: Dear Shmanners (LIVE!)

Published April 14, 2023

[Listen here at themcelroy.family](#)

[theme music plays]

Travis: Hello, internet! I'm your husband host, Travis McElroy.

Teresa: And I'm your wife host, Teresa McElroy.

Travis: And you're listening to *Shmanners*.

[audience whoops]

Teresa: It's extraordinary etiquette.

Travis: For ordinary occasions. Hello, my dove.

Teresa: Hello, dear!

Travis: How are you?

Teresa: I just put my heel through a hole in the stage.

Travis: I hope the boat doesn't sink!

[audience laughter]

Travis: She made a hole in the ship. And listen, I don't know a lot about ships, but that's— there's not supposed to be holes in them. At least holes that aren't already there.

Teresa: I think— I think it was tape.

Travis: Oh, okay.

Teresa: I think I just put my heel through it.

Travis: [loudly] That's what keeps the ship together?

Teresa: [laughing]

[audience laughter]

Travis: My confidence has been undermined!

Teresa: Now, we promised this time we wouldn't talk about the ship.

Travis: Oh, that's true. The first time we did a *Shmanners* on a ship, it was about the, uh, [chuckles] Titanic.

[audience laughter]

Travis: And it took us about three minutes into our script and material to be like, "[tsk] This was a mistake." We could literally watch the audience like, "Ahh." Then we were like, [chuckles] "Okay, no, no, no. Not this time. Not this time. Uh..." So—

Teresa: So, we did a show that will be coming out this week on the mainland.

Travis: [chuckles] Back in America.

Teresa: [laughing lightly] Uh, that is about steamships, but, uh, the American Girl Doll version.

Travis: Yeah. It's an American Girl Doll Book about Samantha going on a steamship, and it doesn't end in a shipwreck.

[scattered audience laughter]

Travis: So, that would be *wild*. Hey, kids! Don't you want to live like this doll? Well, not all of it, of course, but some of it. And so, what we have done instead, is we put the call out, and we got some questions from listeners. And then we're also going to, after we answer some of those, open it up to questions from y'all.

So, you've got some time to think about it, and we have a microphone down here. So, um, if you have a burning question about etiquette or manners or the right way to approach a delicate situation or whatever, ask us. Now, be aware, especially if it's a very specific question, we might not know!

[audience laughter]

Travis: But we might— we could probably muddle through it. But we'll have some time before we do that. And the microphone's over here. Um, wait, has anyone here not listened to *Shmanners* before? Raise your hands.

Teresa: [gasps] Oh!

Travis: Oh, great! Excellent!

Teresa: We should— we should explain then.

Travis: So, uh, our whole deal is that we try to look at manners and etiquette, not from a judgy place, but from a— this is a kind of guidebook to help you navigate situations better. And, really, that's what it is. If you scratch the surface of manners and etiquette, you will see that they were rules kind of created so it's like, "Okay. You go to a party with people you've never met before, and you want to leave." Here are the, like, three things you need to do, and then you can leave, and no one can say you were rude, right?

Teresa: It's about the dance steps, right? We all do a dance in everyday life of, you know, "Hello, how are you?" That kind of stuff, right? And if you don't know the steps to the dance, it's a lot harder to get through your life. So, we're about teaching the dance steps. And we also do a lot of historical stuff. Some of our favorite periods in history [chuckles] involve a lot of rules.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: So— [laughs lightly] So, we spend a lot of time in the Victorian era, um, because they seemed to have a rule for everything. And much of them are hilarious.

Travis: Yep.

Teresa: And we also do historical biographies because the history of manners is the history of our culture. Um, and so, a lot of people have a kind of influence that you may not know right away. But once you— you learn about these people, you learn about how one person changed, you know, the history of American ballet, right? Or different things like that.

Travis: And some of my favorite episodes we've done is we've done episodes about, like, the history of very specific accessories. Like we've done histories on, like, the handkerchief and, like, high heels, but also we do them on idioms. Where it's like why did we start saying stuff like "Let the cat out of the bag" and stuff like that, and what does it mean? All that. But, now, let's make *new* content instead of speaking about old content.

Teresa: Okay. Content.

[audience applauds and whoops]

Travis: It's all I know! [chuckles]

Teresa: [giggling] Okay. So, here's our first listener-submitted question, "How do I respond to rude questions from my in-laws? Ergo: 'Why aren't you having a baby yet? When are you getting married? Which one of you makes more money?' Like, all that stuff."

Travis: Do you respond with, like, [blows raspberry] right? And then you, like, give them a "peace out" and you leave.

[scattered audience laughter]

Travis: No, that's not it. See, that's a joke for those of you who've been listening.

Teresa: [laughing]

Travis: *I don't know what I'm talking about, and Teresa does.*

Teresa: Okay. So, number one: You don't have to answer any question you don't want to answer.

Travis: Yeah.

[audience applauds and whoops]

Teresa: Like, you just don't, and especially—

Travis: Next time, if your mother-in-law's like, "When are you getting married?" Just lean in and go, "Uh, next."

Teresa: [laughing]

[audience laughter]

Travis: And then just wait. Now, she's on the spot!

Teresa: And so, like, when— when, maybe, your in-laws, right? Ask you something that's maybe a little too personal. There are two, kind of, sides to this coin, right? The first one is your relationship, right? You may want to cultivate this relationship further. You may *not* want to cultivate this relationship further. [laughs lightly] And the way you respond is going to influence that and be influenced by that.

Travis: Yeah. In general, um, I will say that it— like, an in-law relationship is very strange. Not, like, personally speaking. [through laughter] I'm not saying it like that. [normally] I'm saying that in its very nature because most of the family— like the family you're born into or adopted into. The family that you have from childhood on, right? You are building what that relationship looks like from, like— from the beginning, right?

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: And then you're stepping into a fully formed family with fully formed processes and ways that they relate to each other. It's like going to, like, a new country that speaks a different language, right?

Teresa: Right.

Travis: And it's like you might have learned the language, but you didn't learn the slang. And you didn't learn, like, how to tell a joke in that language, right? So, the thing that you're saying is, like, you need to figure out how much of that you want to build and in what way. Because it might just be, like, their family's really comfortable talking about very personal questions like that to anyone.

Teresa: Right. And it could be genuine interest, right?

Travis: Right.

Teresa: There— I mean, all mother-in-law jokes aside, um, people—

Travis: [incredulously] There are jokes about mothers-in-law?

[scattered audience laughter]

Travis: I can't imagine why.

Teresa: People tend to enjoy grandchildren.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: And so, uh, [through laughter] most of the time. I hope.

Travis: Well, they like grandchildren 'cause they can give them back—

Teresa: Right.

Travis: ... when they're done.

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: Which is usually about five minutes.

[scattered audience laughter]

Teresa: So, perhaps your mother-in-law genuinely would like to experience grandchildren in their lifetime. And so, it's a genuine question even though it still is pretty rude.

Travis: It's pretty— I mean, it's pretty blunt and personal, but the thing is, like, maybe 10 years from now you will know this person well enough that a blunt personal question wouldn't feel strange, you know?

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: It's— it's a moving target, I think.

Teresa: But also, if you feel like someone is just trying to get a rise out of you, just being kind of a jerk with that blunt question—

Travis: Shove `em. Shove `em down. You make your partner crouch down behind `em—

Teresa: [laughing]

Travis: ... and then you shove them, so they fall back over. And you're like, "I'm the mother now!"

[audience laughter]

Travis: Come in hot! Yeah.

Teresa: That might be a little— a little too hot.

Travis: I run this town!

Teresa: Just a tad. How about, "I'm not comfortable answering that question?"

Travis: Or— yeah. Okay. That's kinda like what I said.

[audience laughter]

Travis: Or you could just say like, "Yeah. I don't know. Next." [laughing lightly]

Teresa: Certainly. [chuckles] Yeah. And here's—

Travis: [laughing] Just hold up a red card. Uh-uh.

[audience laughter]

Travis: No.

Teresa: The overall recommendation, I would say— oh, there is a red card.

Travis: Yeah!

Teresa: [laughing] Would be—

Travis: That's a good safety feature that people use in, like, role-playing games a lot. Your mother-in-law might not know it, but maybe she's a huge nerd. I don't know.

[audience laughter]

Travis: Just slide the X-card. Maybe that is it. It is a thing where you have an X-card, right? That you use in, like, role-playing games in general, where it's like, "Hey, we're touching a subject that I'm not comfortable, like, in the game," right? And you just slide the X-card forward and then, like, the DM knows that you don't like to talk about it, and you can just change lanes. So, maybe you could set it up with like, "Hey, there's some topics I'm not comfortable with. And I don't want it to be a thing where you feel bad asking about it."

Teresa: Or do this beforehand with your spouse, right?

Travis: Yeah!

Teresa: Your significant other is on your team as far as these kinds of questions go, and hopefully as far as everything goes.

Travis: Yeah. It would be wild if the mother-in-law was like, "When are you gonna get married?" And your partner is like, "Yeah! When *are* we going to get married?"

Teresa: [giggling]

[audience laughter]

Travis: "Uh..."

Teresa: Unfortunately.

Travis: "Are we going to have kids? I'm glad you brought that up, Mom! What do you think?"

Teresa: [bursts out laughing]

[audience laughter]

Travis: "What?"

Teresa: So, this is something that maybe—

Travis: [through laughter] "Who makes more? I never asked you how much money you make. [normally] Are we doing good financially? Where are we at?"

Teresa: Maybe before you get married those are the questions.

Travis: Yeah. That's probably a good time to ask about that. "Do you have money? I don't."

[audience laughter grows]

Travis: "Where are you going?"

Teresa: [bursts out laughing] Um, if it can't happen beforehand, you can always try and prepare for the next time by having a kind of like debriefing with your spouse about, "Well, you know, your mom asked us about kids and although we've talked about it, we haven't told our— you know, our families about the way that we feel about that." All that kind of stuff. And you can, you know, talk to each other about that and be a little more on the same team the next time. So, you can face these questions together.

Travis: And as a last resort, buy some smoke bombs and go full Batman. [imitates smoke bomb spraying] And you're gone!

"What? Ah, they're off to fight crime!"

Teresa: This *is* what the show is like.

Travis: Yeah.

[audience whoops and laughter]

Teresa: I'm constantly trying to reign him in.

Travis: I'm helpful in different ways.

[audience laughter grows]

Teresa: Next question! Uh, "I know that salary transparency is important, but when is it appropriate for me to ask about it and when is it bad for me to be like, 'So, how much money do you make?'"

Travis: This is very tricky, right? Because it is important.

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: But it does involve someone else's comfort level when you ask them. Both ways, right? Like, I think it'd be weird. It's been a while since I've worked in an office. So, I'm guessing it would be weird if you walked into an office and announced loudly like, "Hey, everybody! Guess how much

money *I* make!” That might not be the way to handle this. Or, like, “Raise your hand if you think you make more than me. You’re wrong!” Right?

[audience laughter]

Travis: That might not be a good way to go about it. Um—

Teresa: So, in another lifetime, I was a lifeguard, and I managed a pool for a while. And when this would occur, I never told anybody not to talk about it, right? But there really are a lot of nuances that go into most people’s hiring of their first job. Often, lifeguards are 16, 17, 18 years old, and they may not understand the nuances of— of salary.

Travis: Anything. [chuckles]

Teresa: I mean, anything. But you live and you learn, and they’ve got more living to do.

Travis: Beautiful.

Teresa: So, when this would come up, I would talk about how I can only recommend salaries to the hiring company. And salaries are based on, like, experience, and age, and how long you’ve been actually at the pool, and all that kind of stuff. So, hopefully, the employer has a little bit of something prepared to talk about this.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: And there are also different laws. There are a lot of state laws coming down the pipeline that make it illegal to squash this kind of thing. Which I think is great.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: ‘Cause you should be able to talk to people about your salary.

Travis: I would also say, without dancing around it too much, because you don’t want to, like, overread into it, but I think you do— instead of just

saying, "How much money do you make?" Something more like, "Hey, I'm trying to figure out, like, the appropriate range of salaries here."

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: "Would you be comfortable letting me know how much? Or just kind of a ballpark."

Teresa: Right.

Travis: Like, instead of saying, "How much do you make?" Let them know why you're asking. Let them know, like, that you're okay if they're not comfortable discussing it.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: Um, because there's a big difference between "Can I ask you a question?"

"I don't know. Can you?"

And, "How much money do you make?" And instead saying, "Are you comfortable discussing salary because..."

Teresa: And I think that there's really only one situation where it would be, quote, "impolite," right? If you're in a non-work situation with someone who doesn't work in your field, right? So, like, if their job is not comparable to yours, why does it matter how much they make?

Travis: Yeah. There's also a lot of great resources online where you can find, like, by state what kind of the range of pay for different careers and jobs is, so that you can start there. And if you're like, "Okay. I feel like my salary's not in that range." Then you also have a piece of data to go to someone else and go, "Hey, does that sound right to you, this range that's listed on this website? Because I'm not in that range." And then, they can say yes or no instead of—

Teresa: And if you would know this person was the right person to go to if they *also* worked in the same type of job that you worked in.

Travis: Correct. Exactly.

Teresa: Yeah. Okay here's another one. "My best friend is transitioning to different pronouns, but I've known them as other pronouns for 10 years. If I accidentally misgender them, how should I handle it so I can make sure they feel comfortable without making a scene?" Well, I mean, first of all, congratulations to their friend, right?

And the best way— you are doing the best thing that you can. To be a supportive friend is to support them and use their correct pronouns. And it isn't their job to make sure that you correct yourself when you use your right— their not-right pronouns. That's your job. So, again, great work. Um—

Travis: And you also have to be careful not over apologizing.

Teresa: Right. That's the thing, right? When you make a mistake, an apology can be as simple as, "Oh, I'm sorry." And then use the correct one. It's the apology and the correction, right? That's what you need to practice doing so that it doesn't— when the apology is too long—

Travis: Right.

Teresa: ... or the correction is too long, those are things that tend to make anybody uncomfortable. The person apologizing [chuckles] and the person being apologized to.

Travis: And you don't want it to become a situation where now it's about you, the person that made the mistake.

Teresa: Right.

Travis: And they're trying to make *you* feel better. Don't be that person, in general. In this specific instance, and in general. And I also think, uh, along those lines, it is specific.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: So, the nice thing about this is, like, there's a general apologize and correct, but also, you have the chance to then talk to your friend and go, "Hey, in the future when that happens, like, how— what can I do?" That kind of thing and have that conversation with them. But also, just practice their correct pronouns.

Teresa: Yeah. Practice. I mean, I often find myself talking to myself or my animals, um, just in general about, you know, my worries, my life, things that are—

Travis: Your hopes. Your dreams.

Teresa: My hopes. My dreams.

Travis: You know you can talk to me about that too, right? Like—

Teresa: [lightly] Yeah, I know.

Travis: Okay.

[scattered audience laughter]

Teresa: But something— it's a little nicer talking to Buttercup. She's our dog.

Travis: What the?

Teresa: One of them.

Travis: I'm right here! Do a guest spot with her then!

Teresa: I know. But—

Travis: What?!

Teresa: But she can't speak.

Travis: That's the only reason?

Teresa: Yeah.

[audience laughter]

Travis: Not 'cause you enjoy— welcome to the last episode of *Shmanners*.
Uh—

Teresa: [burst out laughing] But you can practice anywhere. You can practice in the mirror. You can practice with your animals.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: With your, uh—

Travis: Talk to your animals about your friend, right?

Teresa: Yeah!

Travis: And make sure you use their pronouns in there.

Teresa: Use the pronoun that they use.

Travis: Yeah. And then do a podcast with them instead of your husband.

[audience laughter]

Teresa: [laughing breathlessly] It would— it would be hard to podcast with Buttercup. I mean, she doesn't speak English, so—

Travis: Okay. All right.

Teresa: ... I wouldn't be able to understand it.

Travis: I'm done talking about this. I don't wanna!

[scattered audience laughter]

Teresa: Okay. Here's one! "Am I supposed to tip a bathroom attendant?"

Travis: Like push 'em over?

[audience laughter]

Teresa: Yes, Travis. Should we push people over?

Travis: Only if they're asking weird questions.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Or if they're cows.

Teresa: You know that's actually really dangerous.

Travis: Yeah, man! Yeah!

[audience laughter]

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Tipping over cows.

Travis: Dangerous for you. Dangerous for the cow. Dangerous for society. Dangerous for, uh, global warming if the cow farts.

[audience laughter]

Teresa: [laughing softly] All right.

Travis: Recently, Sara McKay, who works with us and does a lot of design work, referred to cow tipping as a rich man's sport.

[audience laughter]

Travis: And, like, it ground a meeting to a stop as we were all like, "Wait. What does that mean?" And she stood by it. She was like, "Well, you have to be pretty rich to, like, know where a cow is."

[audience laughter increases]

Teresa: Do you?

Travis: What? And then, Alice, who was there too and works with me and does design with me, was like, "Okay, Travis. Right now, point to where you think the nearest cow is." And I was like, "Why are you siding with her? She just said cow tipping is a rich man's game. What are you *talking* about? What's happening?" It was... the worst day of my life. [chuckles]

Teresa: [bursts out laughing] Okay. Um, so, back to bathroom attendants.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: So, there's a couple of things that I think are— are part of this question that wasn't actually asked. Are you using anything that the bathroom attendant is offering?

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: Um, sometimes they can have things like tampons or mints or—

Travis: And sometimes they just reach over and pull a paper towel out of the dispenser and hand it to you. And it's, like, I could have done that, man. I could've handled that myself.

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: But don't say that out loud. I could— watch how good I do it.

Teresa: [giggling]

Travis: Do it more like I did. [chuckles] I'm a big boy.

Teresa: That sounds like our three-year-old.

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: [sighs] Okay. So, Peggy Post, of Emily Post's family and its [haltingly] conglomerate? I don't know...

Travis: Organization?

Teresa: Organization. Says that it is customary if you use something, to give two or three dollars. Okay?

Travis: Mm-hmm.

Teresa: Yes, I know. It sounded— it sounded very, uh— it sounded expensive to me too. [chuckles lightly]

Travis: Can you imagine? This has actually happened to me before, so I can imagine it. Walking into a bathroom, there was a bathroom attendant that I did not know was going to be there, and realizing, like, I don't have any cash on me. Can I still use this bathroom?

[scattered audience laughter]

Teresa: You can still use the bathroom.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Yes. You absolutely can. You do not have to pay to use the restroom.

Travis: No, I know *that*. But, I mean, what if he hands me a paper towel, then I'm like "Thanks" and I don't have any cash to give him? And he's like, "Never come back."

[scattered audience laughter]

Teresa: Uh, I don't think he would say, "Never come back." I hope not.

Travis: Okay. It was a test, and he owns the whole restaurant.

Teresa: But you can— you absolutely should say, "Thank you."

Travis: Oh, okay.

Teresa: If someone hands you the paper towel, you can say, "Thank you." You can also say, "I apologize. I don't have any cash." Right?

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: This is their job, right? And—

Travis: Hypothetically. We have not established in here that you have checked for credentials or something. It could just be someone who's bored on their date, and they're like, "I'm going to go hide in the bathroom for a while."

Teresa: That happened in *Bob's Burgers*.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Do you remember that episode?

Travis: You didn't have to blow up the spell like that. You could pretend like it's a thing that happens in real life too.

[audience laughter]

Teresa: I just don't think it does.

Travis: It probably doesn't.

Teresa: I think it happens in TV and movies.

Travis: Yeah. Well, now I'm going to do it. If you see me in the bathroom tonight, you'd better tip.

Teresa: [laughing softly]

Travis: You better tip. Paul said that's the only way I got paid to be here, and I gotta pay my own way. So, please, tip me in the bathroom. [chuckles]

[audience laughter]

Travis: Don't do it. Now, I've said it and I'm worried that it'll be, like, an actual joke that you do. Don't. That was a joke for the stage, not for real life out there. Don't hand me money in a bathroom. For a lot of reasons.

[audience applause and laughter]

Travis: You know what? Let's move on.

Teresa: Okay. Um, so, what I'm going to say, instead of two or three dollars. I'm going to say it scales up with if it's an item, it's a dollar, right? If it is a service, sometimes people are prepared to shine your shoes or mend your hem if you have a problem with that. That gets more money. I don't usually carry more than one or two singles. So, it would probably be, if somebody shined my shoes, I'd give them five bucks. You know?

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: That is a large service for something like that. But if someone just hands me a paper towel, treating them like a human to say, "Thank you. I apologize. I don't have any cash." Right?

Travis: Got it.

Teresa: I think that is a good— a good middle ground. Always treat people like they're human.

Travis: Yeah. That's a good start in general.

Teresa: Unless they're dogs like Buttercup.

Travis: Don't. But— okay. Unless they want to be treated like dogs, but then it's a consent thing. [chuckles]

Teresa: Okay,

Travis: Got it.

Teresa: Let's not get in the weeds here.

[scattered audience laughter]

Teresa: Okay. Here's one that I would love to hear you talk about.

Travis: Oh, boy.

Teresa: "Can I actually keep my mobile phone on the table during a meal?"

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: "We live in a new age of phones and I'm just curious what the right answer is."

Travis: So... yes. Next!

[audience laughter]

Travis: Here— okay, here's what I will say in defense of the neuro-spiciness thing. Having my phone on the table where I could see it means I don't have to think about it, for me.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: I don't think this is true of everyone, right? It's not like I'm a brain surgeon on call.

Teresa: Right.

Travis: If anything, Justin and Griffin might text me a funny TikTok.

[scattered audience laughter]

Travis: That's about it, and I think that can wait until the mashed potatoes are done, right? But if it's in my pocket, right? And I feel it buzz or if it's on a surface and I hear it buzz in the room, I'm thinking about it now. But if it's there, and I can look and be like, "Oh, that's nothing." Now, I don't have to think about it. So, for me, it is there so that I'm *not* distracted by it instead of the other way around. And I realize now that this feels like a very personal conversation you and I are having—

Teresa: [laughing]

Travis: ... in front of an audience.

[audience laughter]

Travis: Come in, won't you? [chuckles]

Teresa: Well, I did ask it quite personally because we *do* sometimes have a difficult time at meals trying to convince our children—

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: ... that the TV is off, and we are not playing with our iPads. We're not playing with toys. We are here. This is family time. We're eating a meal together.

Travis: And as soon as Daddy finishes this level on *Flappy Birds* or whatever, we'll go on. *Angry Birds!* What's *Flappy Birds*?

Teresa: I don't know.

[audience laughter]

Travis: It's a new hit— What is it?

[indistinguishable shout from audience member]

Travis: It was real, though? *Flappy Birds*?

Teresa: All right.

Travis: Okay.

[scattered audience laughter]

Teresa: One point for Travis.

Travis: Yes!

Teresa: So, it is difficult to convince them that those are things we're not doing at the table. What we're doing at the table is family time and eating, when you have *your* phone at the table.

Travis: Correct.

Teresa: And whether you—

Travis: That's why I got a watch that tells me what the notifications are, so I can look at it instead of my phone. Now, do I always remember that? No, I have ADHD. [chuckles]

[audience laughter]

Teresa: [laughing softly] So, in the question-asker's case, I think it really depends on why, right? Is your partner going into labor at any minute? And they're not in the room and they might text you? Okay, fine. Yeah, keep your phone on the table. Keep it in your hand if that makes you feel better. Are you a brain surgeon? Are you on call? You should probably have it with you, right?

Travis: Yeah. And cut down on the glasses of wine while you're having dinner.

Teresa: Yeah. [chuckles] If you're a brain surgeon.

Travis: When you're a brain surgeon and you're on call, cut it down to two, maybe.

Teresa: [giggling]

Travis: And then don't tell the patient when you get there.

[audience laughter]

Teresa: Or— or none, maybe.

Travis: I mean, yeah. Ideally.

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: But I'm not a Puritan. And I'm not on the table.

[audience laughter]

Teresa: [laughing softly] But we've all been there with a friend—

Travis: This year on Fox! Coming this summer, *Drunk Surgeons*. [laughing]

[audience laughter grows]

Teresa: No, that's a terrible idea.

Travis: Well, it's a reality show.

Teresa: Also, a terrible idea.

Travis: Okay. I'll workshop it.

Teresa: But we've all been with— out to coffee with a friend. Or you have been at dinner with your family and maybe— my sister won't put her phone down. She's scrolling Instagram or whatever, right? That doesn't feel good to be a party to that. So, I would say that it's dependent on why you need it. And, you know, if you are a person who *does* need the notifications or you'll be thinking about it, have a watch, maybe. Or have it out of your reach, right? So, if you can just see it, but not pick it up. There are ways around it—

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: ... to make the people with you feel like they are *with* you.

Travis: I also think that it's one of those circumstances where having a conversation about it— because one of the things about etiquette and stuff like this is, like, it's not— things *become* rules because people repeat them enough. But rarely do you find any— where it's like this is— like, for example, "elbows on the table" is something that we talk about a lot on the show. As in "elbows on the table rule" 'cause it's a thing people reference all the time.

But "elbows on the table" is only a rule when you're, like, sitting at a table when everyone's so close together that you might knock someone's soup over or whatever if you put your elbows down. It's not something that you actually have to worry about constantly all the time. Especially nowadays where people just don't have soup as much.

[audience laughter]

Travis: And so—

Teresa: I love soup! I have soup every chance I can get it.

Travis: Let's not get into this again!

[audience laughter grows]

Travis: I don't think it's food! It's a drink! It's not important.

Teresa: [laughing]

Travis: Unless it's stew or chili.

Teresa: But now you're getting into it.

Travis: I know. But the thing is, like, talking to the person and saying, "Hey, it bothers me when— or it makes me feel like, uh, you're not as tuned in to this zone as I am." Because it might be— this is a thing that I told Teresa when we started dating, like, if we're at a restaurant and there's a TV on, you will probably catch me looking at that, but I'm not actually watching it.

It's just, like, my— I'm listening while staring off in the distance because if I'm looking at you, I'm thinking like, "How much eye contact should I be making right now? Is this good eye contact? No, what are they saying? Say 'okay'. Okay, yeah! Oh, what did I just agree to? Oh, no." Right? And if I can just zone out, then I'm actually able to listen because my eyes and my ears are not connected. [chuckles]

[audience laughter]

Teresa: [giggling] Right. Um, so, in short—

Travis: [laughing]

Teresa: ... if you— if you really need to—

Travis: To recap.

Teresa: ... you can explain why it is you need to. And also, listen to the explanation of the person you're with as to why they don't want it.

[theme music plays]

[dog barking and new music plays]

Alexis: Are you tired of being picked on for only wanting to talk about your cat at parties?

Ella: Do you feel as though your friends don't understand the depth of love you have for your kitty pet?

Alexis: When you look around a room of people, do you wonder if they know that sloths only have to eat one leaf a month?

Ella: Have you ever dumped someone for saying they're just not an animal person?

Alexis: Us too.

Ella: She's Alexis B. Preston.

Alexis: She's Ella McLeod.

Ella: And we host *Comfort Creatures*. The show where you can't talk about your pets too much, animal trivia is our love language, and dragons are just as real as dinosaurs.

Alexis: Tune into *Comfort Creatures* every Thursday on MaximumFun.

[music fades and ends]

[new upbeat music plays]

Lisa: I'm Lisa Hanawalt.

Emily: And I'm Emily Heller.

Lisa: Wow, Emily! We've been doing this podcast for 10 years!

Emily: I know! But, hey, don't worry, you can jump in at literally *any* episode and hear us talk about some of our favorite stuff. Caterpillars becoming butterflies.

Lisa: Martha Stewart flying around in a private jet full of trees. Yes, you heard me right. Trees.

Emily: Neighbors becoming enemies. Just kidding. [breathless laugh]

Lisa: Whatever messed up stuff we can find on Wikipedia.

Emily: Our impeccable taste in everything from dogs to TV shows to bodily functions.

Lisa: And horses! Lots and lots of horses!

Emily: Come for our formed-up rants about the world. Stay for the catchy theme songs.

Lisa: You might not learn anything, but we're a good "Hey".

Emily: *Baby Geniuses* every other week on Maximumfun.org.

[*Baby Geniuses* theme music ends]

Travis: So, I would say we have, like, 15 minutes before we need to start wrapping up. Do we want to do some audience— audience-y questions?

Teresa: Sure! Sure, if anybody has one.

Travis: Okay. So, if you have questions that you would like us to offer— well, for *her* to offer advice on. And me to be here. It's fine.

Teresa: You mean you can't—

Travis: Okay! Hello!

Audience Member One: So, theoretically, 12-foot skeleton in my yard. Theoretically, neighbor across the street destroyed it.

Travis: Uh-huh.

Audience Member One: And there's a police report. And we have footage. But do you *talk* to them?

[scattered audience laughter]

Teresa: So, the question is your property— some— theoretically, some property was damaged, and you theoretically know who it is.

Travis: Uh, a 12-foot skeleton. Let's— yeah, there's footage and a police report. Do you talk to them? Um, I would say, that this is a circumstance where if you, in your judgment, think good will come out of talking to them and say, like, "I feel like there's some kind of misunderstanding here." Bad blood or whatever that we can clear out, and you *want* to talk to them, you should attempt to. But I do not think you are obligated to mend that, quite maybe literally, fence.

With your neighbor, if you're like, listen, I don't want to have a relationship with this person. What I want is for them to leave me alone and leave my stuff alone. That is, maybe, one of the few times that filing a police report and that makes sense 'cause you don't want to deal with it, right? Unless you want to hire, like, a *Drillbit Taylor* situation.

[audience laughter]

Travis: Where it's a matter— I haven't seen it.

Teresa: What?

Travis: Yeah. It's Owen Wilson gets hired by some kids to be their, uh— be their bodyguard. I haven't seen it. I just know it's a great movie, and—

Teresa: I haven't—

Travis: And okay. But you get my—

Teresa: How do you know it's a great movie? You haven't seen it.

Travis: Yeah. It's a great concept. And so, maybe, hire Owen Wilson to talk to your neighbor.

[audience laughter]

Audience Member One: [chuckles] So, do I post the video that we made roasting their, you know, skeleton destroying *before* the police are done with their investigation or after?

Teresa: After. Wait 'til after.

Travis: Yeah.

Audience Member One: Okay.

Teresa: Yeah. You don't want that kind of evidence being thrown out of court.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: If you do have to go to court and someone says, "Well, but this was a video that they put and they caused, uh, like, some kind of like, mental anguish or whatever." They might get thrown out. So, you got to wait 'til after.

Travis: Yeah.

Audience Member One: Good to know. Thank you. [chuckles]

Travis: You're welcome.

Teresa: [giggling]

Travis: Hello!

Audience Member Two: Hello! My question is, with the rise of technology and, like, emails, with everyone submitting, like, online resumes for either

jobs or auditions for example, what is the proper etiquette of responding to a rejection letter?

Travis: Okay. Wait.

Teresa: Ah! So, that was with online correspondence regarding jobs or auditions how do you respond to a rejection letter? I think that it's like writing a thank you note, right? It is perfectly fine to have a, uh, like, just a form that you click in "Dear, whoever sent you the letter." Right? Thank you for your time. I hope we can work together in the future, right?

And you can just have that and send that to anybody who gives you rejections. Don't worry about making it, like, super personal to them because they're not gonna, like, compare notes [chuckles] or anything, right? But—

Travis: If there was a moment where, like, man, they really went out of their way to arrange the time for the— for us to do a Zoom call or whatever, you can personalize it in that way. I'm just like, "And I really appreciate you working around my schedule," and all that stuff, but you don't *have* to.

Teresa: Right. But I think that the important thing is that you— you frame it like a thank you, so that even though they are not working with you at this point, um, you can kind of make a good impression even as you won't be seeing them anymore, right?

Travis: Yeah. If nothing else, think of it as, like, thanking them for letting you know that you didn't get it.

Teresa: Oh, yeah.

Travis: Because, like, I've been in situations before where I've auditioned for something and then never heard back.

Audience Member Two: That is super annoying.

Travis: And you're like, "I get it's been three years, so I probably didn't get it." Right? That kind of thing.

Teresa: [laughing lightly] Well, the show has come up and gone down, so maybe I didn't get that role.

Travis: Yeah. It's time. Or man, maybe I did, and they were really in a hard place.

Teresa: [bursts out laughing]

Audience Member Two: There's such a mass disconnect too because, like, sometimes you get the automated rejection letter compared to, like, a personalized rejection letter.

Travis: Mm-hmm.

Audience Member Two: So, I didn't know if there was, like, a different one for either one of those.

Teresa: Right.

Travis: It never hurts to try. I mean, yeah.

Teresa: And if you have any contact information for anyone at the company, um, and you can just mention that I received the rejection letter, but I still wanted to thank you for your time. Right?

Audience Member Two: Mm-hmm.

Teresa: I know that a lot of those automated mailboxes don't get answered, but if you um— if you're really interested in cultivating this relationship, you can send it on to any contact that you have with them.

Audience Member Two: Righteous. Thank you.

Teresa: Great.

Travis: Thank you.

[scattered audience laughter]

Travis: Hello!

Audience Member Three: Hi! You're commuting, or you're in line at the grocery store, or someone's in front of you and the tag is sticking out of the back of their dress or shirt—

Travis: Uh-huh.

Audience Member Three: What do you do?

Travis: Rip it off!

Audience Member Three: [laughing]

Teresa: [laughs softly] So, the question was, um, if you find yourself presented with someone's tag sticking out of their clothing, what do you do? I think that this is a— this is a great question because, in general, I follow the rule that if someone can have their— have something fixed in five seconds, you *should* tell them. Like, their fly is down, or their shoe is untied, or they have lipstick on their teeth, right?

If you can correct it in five seconds that's something that you can definitely tell them about. I think that you can say, "Your tag is sticking out of your shirt." And then, either allow them to go for it, or you can say, "Would you like me to help?"

Travis: Yeah. I would also just, as a general rule, avoid, like, tapping someone on the shoulder or touching in any way. Uh, because— well, consent is very important when it comes to that. And you never know how comfortable someone is with physical contact. So, saying, like, "Excuse me. I just wanted to let you know that your tag is sticking out." And—

Teresa: And then they can fix it, or they might even say, "Oh, could you help me?" Right? And that's permission. Um, but if something could not be fixed in five seconds, I think that's just— you should just let it go. You know? Let them go live their life.

Audience Member Three: Gotcha.

Teresa: It can't be helped.

Audience Member Three: Gotcha.

[audience laughter]

Audience Member Three: Thank you!

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: Hello!

Audience Member Four: Hi there! Um, so, I don't use the word "please" very often when I'm interacting with friends and family.

Travis: Mm-hmm.

Audience Member Four: This has led to several debates between me and my friends of, "You're rude. You should use the word please more often." To which I respond with, "I have other ways of making my request polite. And when I do use the word 'please' it carries a lot more weight and you know that this is something important to me."

Travis: Mm.

Audience Member Four: I want to know which side you guys are on.

Teresa: You know, this is very interesting.

Travis: So, the question is with people that you're very close to, friends and family, do you need to use please as much? Or can you save please for, like, really important asks? And this is interesting because we've been talking to our children a lot, and I think that there is a certain concept of implied please, right? Where, like, Bebe doesn't always say "please," but she'll say, like, "May I have that?" Right? And it just, like, clearly you asked that in such a way or that tone of voice is "please." Versus, like, "Give me that." Right?

"May I have that?" There's an implied please in there. But I will say this. If your friends have asked you to say 'please' then it is important to say 'please'. Because it's important enough to them to ask, right? With Bebe, I don't mind if she says "please" every time or not because of that implied nice way to ask. But if someone says to you, "It feels rude to me that you do not always say 'please' when you ask me for something." They are telling you something they need to make the experience of being your friend or family member a more positive experience, and that is worth listening to.

Audience Member Four: Mm.

[audience applause and whoops]

Teresa: And I want to also add to that, that your friends— they understand that you— if you make the commitment to trying you're going to mess up, because people do. And so, I think that if someone who has spoken to you about this, calls you out and says, "Hey, I talked to you about this." You can say, "I'm still working on it. Please, be patient." Or, I mean, "Be patient with me."

Audience Member Four: [laughing]

[audience laughter]

Travis: Be patient with me, please. It's like if I— I— if someone started calling you a nickname, and you were like, "I don't like that nickname." And they kept using it, right?

Audience Member Four: Mm-hmm.

Travis: That would be hurtful 'cause you expect— I think of this in a similar vein. Where if they bring it up, it is important.

Audience Member Four: Awesome. Thank you.

Travis: Hello.

Audience Member Five: Hi! I have ADHD.

Travis: Mm-hmm.

Audience Member Five: It's very relevant for me. When is that appropriate to bring up in casual conversation?

Travis: That is such a— when is it appropriate to bring up ADHD? Um, so, I— in *my* experience, um, it is a thing that I am very casual about talking about, um, but I do think it is something that I try not to use with someone I've just met or someone I'm getting to know. As like a, uh, "Yeah, you'll have to excuse me." Or something of like, "You have to deal with this because I have ADHD." I try to be on best behavior and then trick them into being my friend.

[audience laughter]

Travis: No, I think that it's— that it is something that when you feel comfortable doing it, when it is a moment of, like, um, "Oh, yeah. Well, I have ADHD so, like, this is something I always think about. Oh, yeah! I do the same thing, you know, but I've always thought it was because of my ADHD." Right? I don't think it *has* to be a, "I have something to confess to you."

Audience Member Five: Mm-hmm.

Travis: "Please, sit down."

Teresa: [laughing]

Travis: I don't think it has to be that kind of moment. Um, because the more weight you give it, the more they're like, "Okay. Are you all right?" And it's like, "Yeah. I got a bad case of ADHD."

Audience Member Five: [chuckles]

Travis: I don't know. Like, the doctor gives me sixty to eighty years.

[audience laughter]

Audience Member Five: [laughing]

Travis: It's a weird thing. So, I think it's just, like, as casual a part of a conversation as like what part of town you live in as you're getting to know someone. Or, like, where were you born? Right?

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: I have ADHD. I think it can be part of that same getting-to-know-you phase.

Audience Member Five: Mm-hmm.

Teresa: Right. It's about relationship, right?

Audience Member Five: Yeah.

Teresa: Someone who you, like, if they're checking you out at the grocery store and they say, "Did you find everything okay?"

Travis: Checking you out. Like, the cashier?

Teresa: Cashier.

Audience Member Five: Ah, yeah.

Travis: Not like, "Ooh!"

[audience laughter]

Teresa: I mean, maybe—

Travis: Yeah, maybe.

Teresa: ... they are checking you out.

Travis: We haven't dated in a while. [laughing]

Teresa: [laughing]

Travis: So, we don't know where that happens anymore.

[audience laughter]

Travis: Is it at the grocery store?

Teresa: No.

Travis: Where do people go?

Teresa: Do people go to bars anymore? I don't know.

Audience Member Five: I think, yeah.

Travis: Do they still live their little lives with their hula hoops and their dances? [chuckles]

[audience laughter]

Teresa: [chuckles] So, I think that the more that you are interested in cultivating a relationship, I think that the easier it will be to figure out when the right time is.

Audience Member Five: Thank you.

Travis: Hello!

Audience Member Six: Hey! Um, so, kind of speaking of, like, when you're getting to know someone and stuff, I oftentimes will have a conversation with someone and it'll, like, come up where you're from. And I'll be like, "Oh, I'm from Minnesota originally." And they'll be like, [regional accent stressed] "Oh, Minne-sota!" Like every time this happens constantly.

Travis: Oh.

Teresa: Oh, man.

Audience Member Six: What do I do? Because I find it really rude, but these are always, like, strangers that I don't know, and so I don't feel like I can call them out on it.

Travis: Yeah.

Audience Member Six: So, I just don't know what to do. [chuckles]

Travis: See, I've never had to deal with this being from West Virginia. [chuckles lightly]

Teresa: So, the question is when encountering someone and making small talk, how do you respond when someone makes a— slips a joke in there about where you're from?

Travis: Like, by doing the accent that they think those people have.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: Which we can all agree is wild, right? But also, a thing that we've all done, right? Because it's we— when someone says like, "Oh, I live in Brooklyn." And you're like, "Ehh!" [laughs lightly]

[audience laughter]

Travis: But then if they were like, "I'm, you know, from Spain." I'd be like, "That's excellent. Yes, very nice."

[audience laughter grows]

Teresa: Well, has this— have you ever encountered this as a West Virginian?

Travis: Yeah! I remember when I went to school in Oklahoma, my freshman year I told someone I was from West Virginia and they were like,

"Do you guys even wear shoes there?" And I was like, "You live in Oklahoma!"

[audience laughter]

Travis: We're in this together!

Teresa: [bursts out laughing]

Travis: What are you talking about?

[audience applause]

Travis: We need to have each other's backs. You know? People are awkward, and I think that it is an attempt to have a, like, "I can relate to that in some way."

Teresa: Yeah. It's trying to have a shared experience with you.

Travis: It's just not great.

Teresa: That doesn't make it awesome. Yeah.

Travis: Hey, everybody, let's start a movement here.

Audience Member Six: [giggling]

Travis: Don't you guys do that.

[audience laughter]

Travis: There. We fixed it.

[audience cheers and applauds]

Audience Member Six: Thank you. [chuckles]

Travis: I think, man— it is a chance, by the way, to say like, “I’ve heard that before.” Yeah! Make them feel dumb!

Teresa: [bursts out laughing]

[audience laughter]

Travis: Hello!

Audience Member Seven: It’s great to see you guys.

Travis: Thank you.

Audience Member Seven: Um, I hear you on podcasts, and so it’s nice to see your faces.

Travis: Thank you.

Audience Member Seven: Not a question, but more of something that I have learned is the value of saying, “I forgive you.”

Travis: Mm.

Audience Member Seven: And even in the smallest amount of even bumping into someone and they say, “Oh, I’m sorry.” Saying, “I forgive you.” It has so much more power, and that you can see the person’s face going, “Oh. Wow, that’s great.”

Travis: I think that’s great.

Audience Member Seven: And so, I just wanted to share that with people.

Teresa: Oh, thank you for sharing.

Travis: I think that’s cool. The power of “I forgive you” when someone apologizes.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: Instead of saying, "That's okay."

[audience applause]

Teresa: I guess some—

Travis: I think we have time for one last guest.

Teresa: Yeah, I think this is the last one.

Travis: Hello.

Teresa: I just wanted to say that we are, um, as parents, working on apologizing for the things that— that we do, as well.

Travis: I mean, I don't make mistakes, but other than that, yeah.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: So, thank you for that.

Audience Member Eight: Hello!

Travis: Hi.

Audience Member Eight: Um, I am asexual and it's the first thing on my dating profile because I want that conversation to be opened up, so I'm not leading people on like I've heard a lot of times.

Travis: Mm-hmm.

Audience Member Eight: But I've also gotten that it's too much information when people ask me about it. And I was wondering where the line is there. [chuckles softly]

Travis: I think—

Teresa: I think that those people are not for you.

Travis: Yeah. Too much information on a dating profile is a really great way to weed people out.

Teresa: Yeah.

Audience Member Eight: [bursts out laughing]

Travis: You know what I mean? Be like, “Ah! Excellent!”

[audience laughter]

Teresa: Uh, won’t waste my time on people who think I’m too much.

Travis: Right.

Teresa: Done.

Travis: In general, like, that’s a thing, man. Of just like, “This is information that I want someone to know about me.”

Why do you want me to know that about you?

Well, thanks!

Teresa: Okay, bye!

Travis: Bye! See next. It’s a really— I mean, it’s the same thing of like if you told somebody you had ADHD and they’re like, “Whoa!” [chuckles] You know, like, “Okay. Bye!” Right?

Audience Member Eight: [laughing]

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: Like, life is short.

[scattered audience laughter]

Teresa: I think that, um, you putting something that is important to you in a profile where you're trying to find someone who will be important to you, I think is never— is not too much.

Travis: I agree.

Teresa: You're doing great.

Audience Member Eight: Awesome. Thank you.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: Thank you.

[audience applause]

Travis: All right, everybody. That's going to do it for us. Thank you so much for coming out on this Monday morning to do— to do this show with us. To be here.

Teresa: Yeah! Thank you for being here.

Travis: It would have been weird to do it to an empty house. Probably more weird, though, to do it for one person.

[audience laughter]

Travis: I think it would be less weird to do it for an empty house than, like, one person right there.

Teresa: [giggling] So, you can find us wherever you get your podcasts, but our podcasting home is Maximumfun.org.

Travis: Or you can go to Mcelroy.family. Or just search *Shmanners*. I don't think there's anything else— S-H-M-A-N-N-E-R-S.

Teresa: [giggles] Uh, we have— so at Mcelroyfamily.com, there's a lot of great information on our live shows— on other shows that the McElroy family does. You may or may not know about *MBMBaM* or *The Adventure Zone*.
Hmm.

[scattered audience cheering]

Travis: Hmm. Uh, and tonight I'm going to be doing, uh— leading a Disney sing-along here.

[audience cheering]

Travis: Thank you. Teresa's going to be there as well doing some songs. Then we've got a kids—

Teresa: Because in another life we used to be actors.

Travis: Yeah. We've got a kid's sing-along coming up later in the week. I hope you'll be there for that. I'm doing stuff all week. I'll see you around.

Teresa: Yeah. We'll see you.

Travis: Uh, and I think that's going to do it for us. So, join us again next week!

Teresa: No RSVP required!

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

Teresa: Manners, *Shmanners*. Get it.

[theme music plays]

Maximumfun.org.
Comedy and Culture.
Artist Owned.
Audience Supported.