

## Shmanners 1: Thank You Notes

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**Travis:**

Hey, Teresa. Are thank you notes outdated?

**Teresa:**

More like outstanding.

**Travis:**

Thank you for that joke. It's Shmanners.

[theme music plays]

**Travis:**

Welcome to Shmanners, your guide to extraordinary etiquette for ordinary occasions. I'm your husband host, Travis McElroy.

**Teresa:**

And I'm your wife host, Teresa McElroy. We are so pleased you could join us and we're grateful you've made us a part of your day.

**Travis:**

Um, I have had the benefit of having Teresa in my life for many years now, and having this domestic goddess in my life, uh, I feel like it's basically made me a decent human being by now.

**Teresa:**

We'll make a gentleman out of you one of these days, dear.

**Travis:**

Well, don't make promises. We'll see how it goes. [laughing] We're trying. We'll see. Man, when we met, I would say that, I wasn't bad. Like I wasn't, you know, I wasn't leaving piles and piles of dirty dishes hidden under the couch or anything. But, you know. I was 25. I didn't know anything.

**Teresa:**

I would say that you scraped by as a fine human being does.

**Travis:**

Slightly better than average 25-year-old male, I would say.

**Teresa:**

Sure. Slightly better than average.

**Travis:**

Slightly.

**Teresa:**

Slightly.

**Travis:**

So I wanted to take your gift of guidance and share it with the rest of the world so that everybody could become an, I guess, almost decent human being along with me.

**Teresa:**

Speaking of gifts, it's been about a month since the holidays. How are your thank-you notes coming?

**Travis:**

Um, I would say just about as well, uh, you, uh... I would say just about as well as you'd expect, by which I mean not at all. Um, I, you know, most of the— For most of the cases I said thank you in person, or I'm just gonna like say thank you the next time I see them or send a text message or something.

**Teresa:**

Well, even in this world of email and text messaging, the art of the thank you note is still incredibly important.

**Travis:**

Yeah, but isn't it like a little archaic?

**Teresa:**

How about we'll start with the history and work our way up to the present and find out?

**Travis:**

Oh, so that's the topic of this week's episode. That was the intro, folks. Let's do the show. So, Teresa, tell me, tell me about the history of thank you notes.

**Teresa:**

Well, thank you notes really are ancient. Um, the first known greetings were exchanged in Chinese and Egyptian culture on papyrus.

**Travis:**

Papyrus.

**Teresa:**

So thank you notes, the way that we know them, pretty much started in the 1400s. Uh, Europeans exchanged thank you notes, uh, by writing on paper and they hand delivered greeting cards locally. In 1840, that's when thank you notes really took off because postage was invented.

**Travis:**

Oh. So you didn't have to like send a lad running through the streets and like, I don't know, tripping over horses? I don't know. Whatever was around at that point.

**Teresa:**

[laughs] You, I mean, you, you might send him on horseback. Is that what you—

**Travis:**

Well, no. I meant like I could see a little scamp carrying like a tray with a thank you note on it across town, dodging around the legs of horses as like some rich tycoon type guy was, like, waving his walking stick.

**Teresa:**

You mean like in fairy tales where they hand delivered "you're invited to the ball" notes or whatever?

**Travis:**

Yeah, is that not a real thing that happened 'cause if not, I, I'm really in this moment only, only now realizing that there weren't scamps hand delivering things.

**Teresa:**

Well, I mean until 1840 somebody had to deliver them.

**Travis:**

Correct.

**Teresa:**

Scamp or otherwise.

**Travis:**

Scamp or otherwise. [laughs] One, one way or another, a scamp got it there.

**Teresa:**

[laughs]

**Travis:**

Scamps. The delivery system you can trust since like 1400 to 1839.

**Teresa:**

Then with the inventage of postage stamps it became common to purchase printed notes...

**Travis:**

Mm-hmm.

**Teresa:**

... and cards with artwork created by other people instead of just a piece of paper handwritten by you.

**Travis:**

Gotcha.

**Teresa:**

So then, that's when etiquette books started recommending appropriate practices for writing and sending thank you notes.

**Travis:**

Got it.

**Teresa:**

So since then, uh, technology has taken the primary role in sending and receiving thank you notes, invitations, and general greetings. So e-cards, right, and emails...

**Travis:**

Uh-huh.

**Teresa:**

... and, and calling and texting, although, I do have to say that I think that the original form of a handwritten thank you note really is my favorite thank you note to get and give.

**Travis:**

Well, I'll say this. Um, so one of the questions that we got a lot of, specifically one from Rebecca, who said, "When is an email thank you note appropriate?"

Um, and so I think, and a lot of people asked about, like, e-cards and text messaging and that kind of thing, and I will say my uninformed opinion is it just depends on who you're sending it to.

**Teresa:**

Exactly. I would definitely agree with that. I would say that it depends on who you're sending it to, your relationship to them, and what they gave you.

**Travis:**

How so?

**Teresa:**

Well, so like if my... Let's say my mom sent me something, uh, in the post that... It wasn't for my birthday, it was just she thought of me and here's something that makes me think of you. I would probably call her because I talk to her all the time anyway.

**Travis:**

Mm-hmm.

**Teresa:**

Um, that doesn't mean that I wouldn't send her a thank you note just on principle because I like sending thank you notes, so. [laughs]

**Travis:**

Well, you love thank you notes.

**Teresa:**

I probably would send her a thank you note but I don't think that anyone who is that close in relationship for a non-special occasion would mind speaking to you about it.

Um, my mom doesn't really text very well, so I probably wouldn't text or email her, just because that'd be a little more trouble than it's worth.

**Travis:**

Mm-hmm.

**Teresa:**

But I would definitely call her.

**Travis:**

Well, this leads to my next question. So the question is when does it apply? Um, and we had a lot of confusion around this on Twitter. Um, lots of... So, for example, uh, @handfulofnotes, which is very appropriate for this topic, um, asked, "Sending out generic, 'Everyone, thank you for blank' notes versus sending out individualized thank you notes?" And Onsarablast, "What exactly should I be writing thank you notes for? Presents, dinners, parties?"

**Teresa:**

So, uh, I am gonna address both of those questions at the same time. So the thing is, first of all, for thank you notes you're sending them to individual people so even if they are form letter, no one is gonna compare [laughs] thank you notes.

**Travis:**

See, that's, that's always been one of my biggest concerns. I remember doing thank you notes for, like, my high school graduation and I just felt like I was writing the same thing in every one.

And for some reason, at, like, 18, I was convinced that, like, my grandmother and my mom's friend would know somehow, like, "This isn't, this doesn't sound like he's writing to me," and like I was really concerned with that for some reason.

**Teresa:**

Travis, I'm certain that your grandmother's friends and your mom and all those people were just so happy to get one that it didn't really matter if they got the same message and they're not going to compare notes. They, I mean, they really aren't. People who get a thank you note are really just so happy to get one...

**Travis:**

Mm-hmm.

**Teresa:**

... to receive that gratitude back again, that it doesn't really seem to matter. I would, and I am, going to explain how to write a nice thank you note that is a little formulaic that isn't just, "Thank you for the blank." You know?

**Travis:**

Gotcha. Um, what about as far as like when to send them?

**Teresa:**

Well, so there are conflicting sources about this.

**Travis:**

Okay.

**Teresa:**

Um, so I would say that the best time to write it is really within a day or two of getting that gift. Um, especially in today's age of ordering things online, the sooner that you can let people know that you received their gift, the better it is.

**Travis:**

Now you keep saying gift, but I feel like... We've talked about this many times and I know that you are a person who if we were invited to someone's home, um, or if someone like takes us out to dinner, that you write thank you notes for that.

Like occa— As far as occasions go, gift receiving, what else? What other occasions?

**Teresa:**

Well, isn't someone inviting you to their home a gift of their time and their space and their energy?

**Travis:**

Well, okay.

**Teresa:**

And isn't someone, in paying for your dinner or taking you out to dinner, a gift?

**Travis:**

And isn't every smile a gift and every... Yes, I know, I realize that.

**Teresa:**

You couldn't hear it, uh, people out there on the internet, but I gave a giant eye roll.

**Travis:**

Yes, I received a patented Teresa McElroy eye roll. Um, but there, I feel like, and I'm not the expert here, but I know, um, you have told me before and we've talked about, like, a job interview, for example, or, um, you know, someone picking you up from the airport, that it, it seems to me, and please correct me if I'm wrong.

I have gleaned that if you feel like you should send a thank you note, that is the time to send a thank you note.

**Teresa:**

Exactly. I'm not recommending that for every person who passes you on the street and says hello you should send them a thank you note. What I'm saying is it's about the time.

If someone, for instance, picked you up from the airport and it's a fairly long way back home or back to their house or back to the airport, I think that that warrants a thank you note because they took a lot of their time.

Um, if, uh, if it really bothers you about, "Ugh, I haven't sent a thank you note. Now it's too long and..." You know what? I think we're getting ahead of ourselves. [laughs]

**Travis:**

Okay. But I will say this. Let's just knock this out of the park now 'cause this was a big question we got like repeatedly on both Twitter and Facebook. Should you ever send a thank you note for receiving a thank you note?

**Teresa:**

My opinion is no.

**Travis:**

Uh, no. Okay, great.

**Teresa:**

Because unless you are interested in corresponding with this person back and forth and back and forth, and certainly, please correspond in letters.

Everybody loves getting mail. But to send a thank you note for a thank you note is really kinda overkill. If they included money in their thank you note? [laughs]

**Travis:**

I guess?

**Teresa:**

Maybe you should send them a thank you note but once you thank someone for a gift, I don't think that they need to thank you for the thank you. If—

**Travis:**

No, if you like see them like, you know, two weeks later, like you hang out.

**Teresa:**

I mean, even—

**Travis:**

And be like, "Hey, I got your thank you note. That was great." Like...

**Teresa:**

Yeah. Yeah, sure. Why not? And even if you don't see the person, at that point it really just becomes, "Do I want to continue corresponding and make this my pen pal?" Maybe you do.

**Travis:**

Uh, @andyellis also asked about occasions in which to send and, um, the two that really struck me were professors writing letters of recommendation...

That seems like a yes, right? Like if somebody takes the time out to write a letter of recommendation for you, would you send a thank you note for that?

**Teresa:**

Um, I think that there's a difference between someone who sat down and wrote you a specific letter of recommendation and someone who has a formula, like a form letter that they just put your name and information and

maybe like a couple of details about you in, because I have, uh, encountered people who do that, people like professors who have to write a lot of them.

Um, but if you got the indication that maybe that's not the case, that they did really sit down and think about it, they gave a lot of time to you so, yes, you should write one.

**Travis:**

What about the other thing that Andy asked about, is romantic gifts?

**Teresa:**

Um, maybe for a large gift. I could see how, uh, if your romantic partner gave you a car, right?

**Travis:**

Well, yeah.

**Teresa:**

That deserves a thank you note.

**Travis:**

Yeah.

**Teresa:**

But if they brought you home a coffee from the coffee shop they went to, you're right there. Express your gratitude to them there.

**Travis:**

It also strikes me. My take on it would be, did they hand it to you? Did you hug them and kiss them for receiving it? Or did they, like, have flowers and a bear delivered to your office and made you feel really special in front of other people?

That seems like a thing. Like were they there to see how happy you were to get it? Then you might not need a thank you note for that.

**Teresa:**

I agree. And, and that's the way that I generally treat, uh, Christmases, like Christmas gifts, um, where all the family is together to open up those Christmas gifts.

A little hug and a kiss afterwards to say, "Thank you so much," is enough, um, unless they shipped gifts directly and they don't know when they have arrived.

**Travis:**

Mm-hmm.

**Teresa:**

I think that's one of the big things. When people aren't there to see you open the gift and they've sent it by post, you really need to write them a thank you note. And I think even that you could give a little email send off or a text send off. "Hey, I got your gift today."

And that doesn't replace your thank you note but it certainly gives you more time to write your thank you note [laughs] because once you show them that you have received the present, then people are a little more at ease and you have a little more time to write that note.

**Travis:**

Speaking of time, um, one of the big questions that we got, uh, including one from @bridge579 was, uh, what's the timeframe? Uh, is there a time to send it when it is too late?

**Teresa:**

Ooh.

**Travis:**

Or too early?

**Teresa:**

Ooh, again. Uh, there really is no consensus. I would say never too early. If you open that gift, you write your notes. Uh, I mean, I have been at, uh,

bridal showers and baby showers where somebody's job is to write down what you got from who and you do your thank you notes right after.

Um, and as far as length? Well, different sources say different things. Um, for weddings, in an example, and I know that I did receive several questions about weddings specifically, because that seems to be one of the, um, the occasions that people really do still write thank you notes for.

**Travis:**

It seems like everyone can agree weddings equal thank you notes.

**Teresa:**

I saw everything from three weeks to a year. Can you believe that?

**Travis:**

A year.

**Teresa:**

A year. Well, and I would say there are extenuating circumstances—

**Travis:**

Mm-hmm.

**Teresa:**

... behind those thank you notes. For example, if you and your partner move right after your wedding—

**Travis:**

Mm-hmm.

**Teresa:**

... nobody expects you to send out thank you notes in a week. The degree of the life change when you get married, I think should be reflected in the time you're allowed to wait.

**Travis:**

Well, one of the questions we asked, uh, it was like too late. Like, for example, I saw a couple people say, like, "It's been a year or a year and a half. Should I just not send them?"

And the first thing that occurred to me is like if I had sent, even if it was like a year and a half and I got a thank you note, I'd be like, "Uh, okay. It's better late than never." Like, uh, I don't think there's anyone who's gonna be like, "I just got one? And I'd prefer not to get one at all."

**Teresa:**

[laughs] Well, I think that there are a couple of circumstances surrounding that. One, have you already written them? If you've already written them, please just put it in the mail and get it over with.

Um, if you haven't written them, would it maybe be better for you to send out an email blast just so that people can get it? Just so that you can get it off of your conscience? I don't think that anyone in this day and age is going to write you off of your social network because they didn't receive a thank you note from them.

Um, back in Victorian times and even later in the United States' history, it was commonplace to really kind of exclude people who had snubbed you in a, you know, in etiquette ways.

**Travis:**

Well, we also, we also didn't have, like, Xboxes and TV and, like, the internet then, so people had a lot more free time to sit around and write thank you notes. There wasn't a lot, like, of compete—

Nobody was going to see The Force Awakens so, like, if you didn't write a thank you note, it was like, "What else were you doing?"

**Teresa:**

I—

**Travis:**

What else were you doing, Lord Steven?

**Teresa:**

I would argue that with today's technology it makes it a lot easier to write thank you notes. You can write them on your computer and print them out. For instance, if you have terrible handwriting, which Andrew, uh, on Facebook asked.

Then print them out. Stick a little printout in your thing. Go to, uh, Kinko's because that's pretty awesome. We have copy machines, you know? I think that just because you have an excuse not to do them doesn't mean you shouldn't do them.

**Travis:**

So what are your feelings on like the pre-written thank you notes where, like, you just fill in a name and pop it in an envelope and send it?

**Teresa:**

I would say that getting a thank you note like that is better than getting no thank you note at all.

**Travis:**

Excellent point. I know you. One of the, uh, things I learned about you very early on when we first moved in together, was you have, I believe at this point, like two different sets of puffy paints and markers and different colored paper and you, like, collect thank you note fixings.

**Teresa:**

Well I do because I enjoy that kind of thing. Uh, for instance, when we had our wedding, I sent out handmade thank you cards. I used leftover paper from our, uh, programs and I bought a silver pen at Michael's and really just wrote on there a big thanks on the front and then thank— on my little thank you form on the inside, um, because I enjoy doing that.

But it doesn't make a person who goes and buys their cards from the dollar store, which I also do, uh, it doesn't make them any less sincere than me.

**Travis:**

Okay. Well, so you mentioned earlier about content, what, what one could put in, uh, one of the thank you notes, which was always one of the things that kind of stymied me. Um, I never sent my college, my graduation thank you notes because I put it off for so long because I...

That was kind of my excuse, was like, "I don't know what to write," and then after like six months I was like, "Well, it's too late now. If I send them it would just be embarrassing." But, really, I think I just didn't wanna send them. Um, but content-wise, what does a thank you note actually need to entail?

**Teresa:**

Well, Travis, sidebar. If you had sent those, maybe we'd have— We would have gotten more presents for our wedding.

**Travis:**

I mean, yes. That's a good rule of thumb in general. One of the questions was, like, uh, that we saw on Facebook a lot was like, "Why should this even still be a thing? Why should you do thank you notes?" Because it gets you more pre...

**Teresa:**

[laughs]

**Travis:**

Every time you send a thank you note and someone's like, "Oh, they took time out of their day to let me know that they really appreciated the thing I do for them," you're that much more likely to get stuff again in the future!

**Teresa:**

Exactly, and there are people, friends of ours, who swear by this, who have gotten... Uh, my friend Alexa. She let me know today. She said that she really credits a lot of the gifts she continues to receive from her grandmother's friends to those thank you notes that she wrote to them when she graduated. Okay, Travis. I'm going to share with you my three-step thank you note.

**Travis:**

Please do.

**Teresa:**

So this isn't really a step because it's pretty much a given. You say, "Dear so-and-so."

**Travis:**

Hello, Lord Steven.

**Teresa:**

That's our opener, all right? First step is, "Thank you for the blank."

**Travis:**

Thank you for the Ewok village playset.

**Teresa:**

Great. Step two is you're gonna tell them what you're gonna do with that.

**Travis:**

So, uh, hello, Lord Steven. Thank you for the Ewok village playset. I cannot wait to recreate the scene where the Ewoks are going to eat Han Solo.

**Teresa:**

Great. And step three, refer to some future meeting with them that you're looking forward to.

**Travis:**

I can't wait for you to come over so you can be Chewbacca when the Ewoks try to eat them. [laughs]

**Teresa:**

Perfect. And another closer. "Thank you for thinking of me. Thank you for your generosity. Thanks again," and your name.

**Travis:**

Thanks again, Lord Travis.

**Teresa:**

Exactly. See, wasn't that easy?

**Travis:**

Yes. And you probably don't have to be as, uh, poetic and write as beautifully as I just did. You could say, "Dear Grandma, thank you so much for the flowers. I will admire them every day. I can't wait to see you on your birthday. Love, your name."

**Teresa:**

Perfect. Perfect. And if you follow that and you write them, it'll seem a little formulaic but you can really get across exactly what you're gonna say, um, and there's, like I said, no reason to try and wax poetic because no one's gonna compare notes. They're not.

**Travis:**

And it's, it's really the thought that counts, like...

**Teresa:**

Yeah.

**Travis:**

... receiving the note is the important thing, not how beautifully you write it.

[theme music plays]

**Sydney:**

Hi, I'm Sydney McElroy.

**Riley:**

And I'm Riley Smirl and we cohost a podcast called Still Buffering, a sisters' guide to teens through the ages.

**Sydney:**

On our show, we tackle all of the hot teen topics that kids have on their minds today.

**Riley:**

Hot teen topics?

**Sydnee:**

Well, you know, the questions that are plaguing teenagers through their tumultuous growing years. Questions like how do I party? Or what do I do with all this hair everywhere? [singing]

**Raleigh:**

The same questions that people like Sydnee had during their years as teenagers, many, many, many—

**Sydnee:**

Okay, not that many.

**Raleigh:**

So, so long ago.

**Sydnee:**

Yeah, okay. I think they get the idea. So search for Still Buffering on iTunes or maximumfun.org for new episodes every Tuesday. Still Buffering.

**Raleigh:**

I'm a teenager.

**Sydnee:**

And I was, too.

[ad break ends]

**Travis:**

Um, so we had a couple of questions that I would like to get your opinion on. These are a little bit more open-ended, a little less structured. Uh, Rachel had a question that I've always wondered about, which is how long should you keep thank you notes that you've received?

**Teresa:**

If you want to decorate with your thank you notes, you should keep them. If you don't want to decorate with them, get rid of them.

**Travis:**

You have a board that's got like, uh, crisscrossed ribbons on it—

**Teresa:**

Mm-hmm.

**Travis:**

... that you put like wedding invitations and thank you notes and like Christmas cards at Christmas, that kind of thing, into.

**Teresa:**

'Cause that's my kind of crafty aesthetic.

**Travis:**

I would also say, um, it seems to me like it would be important what the occasion or present you're being thanked for. Like, if you were best man at a wedding, that might be one you wanna save. If you gave someone a bouquet of flowers on their birthday, you're probably just good reading it and then throwing it in the trash.

**Teresa:**

Right, because the sentimentality is what it is. If you're keeping a thank you card, it's for you. It's not for the other person. So don't be afraid to throw it away right away because it served its purpose.

It thanked you and now it's done and you can throw it out if you want to. Um, I would never be offended if anyone opened a thank you note and then put it straight into the trash. They got it, that was for them, and now it's done.

**Travis:**

Um, so we talked a little bit about thank yous in person but Alison wanted to know when is it okay to say thank you in person and leave it at that?

**Teresa:**

Well, I think special occasions like Christmas. I mentioned before, um, if you had a birthday party where you discouraged gifts, I would definitely say thank you in person is just fine. Uh, thank you for coming. Perfect.

**Travis:**

Say, um, someone gave me a ride home from the airport and I gave them \$20 for gas. I don't have to write a thank you note for that, right? I gave them \$20. [laughs]

**Teresa:**

Right, because you paid them for their service.

**Travis:**

Okay. I gotcha.

**Teresa:**

I would not consider paying someone, uh, for a service like that a gift because you compensated them.

**Travis:**

But if someone, like, housesat for you as a friend, that's a perfect occasion to, like, write a thank you note.

**Teresa:**

Exactly.

**Travis:**

But if someone, like, got you a candy bar while they were at 7-Eleven, probably just an in-person thank you is okay there, right?

**Teresa:**

I would agree with that, um, because they're probably close enough to you that you, uh, that they thought of you to get a candy bar or maybe even you asked for it. [laughs] Um, they, I'm certain, will just be— I'm certain that they'll just feel fine. You give them a thank you in person.

**Travis:**

But it is important to say thank you.

**Teresa:**

Oh, definitely.

**Travis:**

Don't just like grunt at them like some kind of monkey person.

**Teresa:**

[laughs]

**Travis:**

Um, so Joshua asked a question that I think is gonna lead us into our next topic. We mentioned the idea of a thank you note for job interviews. I can speak personally to this because I've interviewed a lot of people, um, when I worked at Best Buy.

I interviewed a lot of people, and when I worked at the Cincinnati Shakespeare Company, I interviewed a lot of people, um, and all of those people, I only received a thank you note once and it made such an impact on me. I pinned it up in my cubicle and that person did end up getting the job. I'm not gonna say just because of the thank you note, but—

**Teresa:**

That I'm certain that they were well-qualified.

**Travis:**

Yes. But there was something about receiving the thank you note that kind of clicked in my head like, "Oh, this is a person who, you know, is thoughtful and thorough and, like, takes this seriously," and it reflected very, very well on them.

**Teresa:**

Exactly, and even if you don't get the job, maybe you just weren't right for that job. But if a person is in charge of hiring, they're gonna need to hire people for different jobs...

**Travis:**

Well—

**Teresa:**

... and if you give them a thank you note, they might think of you again.

**Travis:**

That was the question from Joshua, which was, "Should I write a thank you note if I don't get the job?" And included in that, um, "Should I ask how to improve my interview techniques?"

**Teresa:**

Um, [laughs] you, okay. First part is, yes, if you don't get the job, because you should be sending your thank you notes even before the job, uh, is awarded.

Um, you should be sending your thank you notes that evening for the interview so that they get there in time for the person to still have it fresh in their brain. Um, and the second part, is no, um, because people who are hiring, that is not their job to teach you and critique you.

Um, their job is to find the best person, not to make the best person. If that was what they were interested in, they would hire apprentices under them and teach in order for them to get the job.

**Travis:**

Plus that's not really what thank you notes are for, so that kind of, like, backdoor, "Hey, thanks, and also..." Like, no, just say thank you and leave it at that.

**Teresa:**

Exactly. It is important that you thank everyone you come in contact with at a job interview. Get as many business cards or letterheads of people you meet and send everybody at least a baseline thank you email, um, because you never wanna leave anybody out and maybe that might be the difference between you getting the job and you not getting the job.

**Travis:**

Just because it's not the person who interviewed you doesn't mean that they don't have, uh, a lot of opinion and a lot of sway. You never know whose opinion is important when you go on for a job interview.

**Teresa:**

Exactly. In summation, what I recommend is an email that night for everyone that you have been able to collect business cards and letterhead or, or come in contact with, and then sending a thank you note after the fact.

**Travis:**

Great. So, Teresa.

**Teresa:**

Yes, Travis.

**Travis:**

Can you give me maybe, uh, a little bit more fun, a little less helpful examples of some thank you notes?

**Teresa:**

Absolutely. So let's have some fun with greetings, okay?

**Travis:**

Please.

**Teresa:**

Here is a couple of opening and closings from medieval manuscripts.

**Travis:**

Ooh.

**Teresa:**

Won't that be delicious?

**Travis:**

Oh, it sounds, it sounds amazing.

**Teresa:**

So here's a bad example. This is a love letter from Heloise to Abelard.

**Travis:**

God, that's a good name.

**Teresa:**

Sure is. "To her master née father, to her husband née brother, his handmaid née daughter, his spouse née sister. To Abelard, Heloise."

**Travis:**

[laughs] I don't know who that's addressed to.

**Teresa:**

I don't really either. I think that they were trying so hard to be so correct. I don't even know what that means.

**Travis:**

I just picture like a postman in the 1100s just like scratching his head and he's like, "I don't know who it—"

**Teresa:**

[laughs]

**Travis:**

He just gives it to the first person he sees in the house.

**Teresa:**

[laughs]

**Travis:**

And he goes, "Give this... I think it's for Abalone. I don't know. Just hand this to somebody."

**Teresa:**

[laughs] How 'bout you read the good example I've provided?

**Travis:**

This one is from 15th century England. "From William Paston to the Vicar of the Abbot of Clooney, um, my right worthy and worshipful lord, I recommend me to you."

That's pretty pow— Speaking of a letter of recommendation. That would be such a power move to be like, "Yeah, here's my letter of recommendation. It's from me, about me. I am awesome."

**Teresa:**

[laughs]

**Travis:**

"Allow me to recommend myself."

**Teresa:**

I think that maybe the usage of recommend was a little different then. Um—

**Travis:**

"Have you tried me? I'm great. [laughs] "

**Teresa:**

I'm, I think maybe the 15th century recommend meant something different.

**Travis:**

You've tried the rest, now try the best. Uh, myself. [laughing] Do you have another one for me, my dear?

**Teresa:**

Oh, I do and you have to read it, Travis.

**Travis:**

Oh, okay. Um, this is, uh, from John Paston to the Duke of Norfolk. "To the right high and mighty prince and my right good and gracious lord, my lord the Duke of Norfolk, meekly beseecheth your highness, your poor and true

continual servant in order, John Paston the Younger, that it might please your good grace to call on to your most discreet and notable remembrance." I have no idea what I just said.

**Teresa:**

[laughs]

**Travis:**

I don't know what any of that meant. I felt like I was missing like eight nouns and seven verbs. That feels like a Mad Lib. Like you could fill in like, "Okay, oh, I heard somebody say cow. Okay, great."

**Teresa:**

Okay, well, what he said was, "Hey, Duke of Norfolk. It's me, the lowly John Paston. I hope I can talk to you a little bit about this stuff."

**Travis:**

Well, okay. So this is a great example of when not to be too flowery 'cause I bet the Duke of Norfolk, even back then, probably read that and he's like, "What i— what?"

**Teresa:**

[laughs]

**Travis:**

"What did he say? Who is this guy?"

**Teresa:**

They had a little more, uh, they had a little more practice in the flowery speech, I think.

**Travis:**

Maybe.

**Teresa:**

So let's do something a little more recently, okay? Um, I have a beautiful thank you note from 1974 when John Lennon and his friend Harry Nilsson were ejected from a Los Angeles nightclub.

He sent a variety of apologies to those who were involved in or affected by the incident and the American actress, Pam Grier, received this note. "Dear Pam. I apologize for being so rude and thank you for not hitting me."

**Travis:**

[laughs]

**Teresa:**

"John Lennon. PS, Harry Nilsson feels the same way."

**Travis:**

So if you're wondering if it's cool to send thank you notes, John Lennon did it and thanked Pam Grier for not punching him.

**Teresa:**

[laughs]

**Travis:**

So, yes, I would say it's very cool. See, that's an occasion I never would've thought of to send a thank you note. You send it for job interviews. You send them for wedding gifts. You thank, you send someone for not punching you. [laughs] Me, I could send a lot of those. I owe a lot of people a lot of thank you notes for not punching me.

**Teresa:**

Mm, you should get started.

**Travis:**

So, the— I would say the number one question we got. Um, I saw some people were railing against thank you notes. Some people who said, "I don't do it." And the number one question we got is, "Is this still a thing? I've never received one." Or, "My family sends them but I've never talked to anyone else who does. Is this still a thing?"

**Teresa:**

Yes, it is absolutely still a thing and in fact, it is quite in vogue.

**Travis:**

Really?

**Teresa:**

Really is. Um, there are whole shops dedicated just to paper products. Um, there is a shop in Chicago called Greer that reports that stationary and greeting cards, uh, are very much alive.

There's a perception that stationary is something for previous generations but it's absolutely not true, because the average age of their customers is mid-30s and approximately 35% of their customers are male.

**Travis:**

Would you say that, um, thank you notes are a little bit hipster? I mean is it a little bit of that like, "I don't use a computer. I type on a typewriter. And, oh, I only have artisanal bacon and I don't send emails. I write it down on paper."

**Teresa:**

If being hipster means being polite, then yes it is.

**Travis:**

Oh, okay. Um, I also, uh—

**Teresa:**

[laughs]

**Travis:**

I'm a huge fan of Nick Offerman and he talks about in his book, *Paddle Your Own Canoe*, that like it's so, it is so nice... Listen. I don't care how jaded you are. I don't care how cynical you are.

When someone hands you a piece of paper that they wrote you a note on, suddenly you're right back to like that 12-year-old in middle school getting passed a note who's like, "Oh, so I'm special." Right?

It's so much more special than getting an email or a text message to know that someone took the time to, like, write it on a piece of paper and then sent it through the magic that is the post office and you received a physical thing that you can hold in your hands.

**Teresa:**

Exactly. And that feeling of being special, Travis, it's good for you.

**Travis:**

Really?

**Teresa:**

It really is. It's great for your mental health. It's called gratitude intervention and recent scientific findings link this gratitude to increased optimism, stress reduction, and better night's sleep.

**Travis:**

So it's good for everybody. It's good for the receiver and it's good for the writer because it's a skill that we don't often, uh, flex and it's always good to practice your handwriting, I guess? That's nice.

**Teresa:**

Sure.

**Travis:**

Sure. So, uh, at the end of the day, we should all be sending thank you notes. Um, we should all be a little more, a little more grateful, I would say.

**Teresa:**

It certainly makes me feel very special when I receive something in the mail from somebody.

**Travis:**

Well, we would like to send out a few of our thank you notes now. Uh, first and foremost, I wanna say thank you to our listeners and thank you to the people who wrote in on Twitter and Facebook asking us questions about, uh, about thank you notes.

Our next topic is going to be table manners, so if you have any questions or thoughts or if you just wanna tell us an anecdote of a time either you completely embarrassed yourself or a time which table manners made a huge impact on your life in some way, you can email us. Shmannerscast@gmail.com.

You can tweet at us @shmannerscast, um, or you can join our Facebook group. Uh, you can go to bit.ly/shmannersfb. Shmanners is S-H-M-A-N-N-E-RS. Kayla Wasil, who designed our logo, it's maybe one of my favorite things I've seen in a long time. It's super cute and it really shows off how super cute we are, I would say.

If you haven't seen our logo yet, go check it out and then tweet at Kayla, @kaylamwasil, W-A-S-I-L, and have her draw something for you. Pay her for it and have her design something for you. Her work is amazing.

And thank you to Brent "Brentalfloss" Black for doing our intro and outro music. If you'd like, you could commission some music from him. Just tweet him @brentalfloss and ask him to write some music for your podcast or your website or anything like that. He's not only an amazing composer, he's also one of my best friends.

**Teresa:**

I would like to send a thank you up to my girl, Emily Post.

**Travis:**

Word up. Word up, Emily.

**Teresa:**

Word up, Emily.

**Travis:**

How's stuff in heaven, I guess?

**Teresa:**

[laughs] I—

**Travis:**

Uh, we also wanna say thank you to maximumfun.org.

**Teresa:**

Is she dead?

**Travis:**

Yeah.

**Teresa:**

Aw.

**Travis:**

Yeah.

**Teresa:**

No more new books, huh?

**Travis:**

Well, no. They're still putting them out. I think like her grandkids or great-grandkids or some— Her descendants are still putting out books. We also wanna say thank you to maximumfun.org for hosting the show.

If you haven't already, go check out all the other awesome maximumfun.org shows including Still Buffering, a brand-new show that's joining right along with us, hosted by Sydnee McElroy and her sister Rileigh Smirl. Um, if you've got a second, go on iTunes and rate, review, and subscribe.

It helps us, like, fly up the podcast charts and makes it easier for people to find us. We're a new show so we're just, you know, trying to get started. So if you like the show, tell a friend. If you have a loved one who could improve their manners, maybe tell them. Say like, "Hey, Steve. You're a little bit gross. Check out this podcast."

**Teresa:**

[laughs] Speaking of which, I, uh, received several texts from your, um, stepmother.

**Travis:**

Oh, okay. Well, I'm sure Carol's gonna be a huge fan of this show.

**Teresa:**

[laughs]

**Travis:**

Um, I'm glad that you're listening, Carol. I assume. Um, but yeah, thank you for joining us. Teresa, thank you for joining me. You are an absolute pleasure.

**Teresa:**

Oh, well thank you, Travis. I love spending time with you.

**Travis:**

I hope that everyone joins us again next week.

**Teresa:**

No need to RSVP.

**Travis:**

Thank you for joining us for Shmanners.

**Teresa:**

Manners, Shmanners. Get it?

[theme music plays]

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