

Shmanners 376: Ask Shmanners

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[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.

Teresa: It's extraordinary etiquette...

Travis: For ordinary occasions. Hello, my dove.

Teresa: Hello, dear.

Travis: How are you?

Teresa: I'm okay. Still recovering from my sneeze attack.

Travis: Yeah. The sneeze came in here outta nowhere—

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: —and I was like, "Hey, whoa. This is my house, buddy."

And the sneeze said, "I'm here for your wife."

And I said, "Oh."

And then she sneezed 15...

Teresa: 15 times.

Travis: ... 15 times. And the sneeze said "My work here is done!" And left.

Teresa: I know.

Travis: It was strange. Um, who was that masked [crosstalk]?

Teresa: [laughs] And I blew my nose in between probably number 10 and 11, but still sneezed. It feels like I got, like...

Travis: An ab workout?

Teresa: In a time loop. Like, it was just a continual [crosstalk].

Travis: Did you engage your core?

Teresa: I think—I think so? Is that how you get out of a time loop, you engage your core?

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: That's the only way out. That's—that's—don't you remember that scene in Groundhog's Day when it's about, uh, you know, an hour and a half in, and Andie MacDowell's like, "Well, have you tried engaging your core?"

And he does that once, and suddenly he pops out.

Teresa: Excuse me. I believe it's Groundhog Day. Not Groundhog's Day.

[pause]

Travis: How could you do this to me? Now I have to look.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Oh my god. Oh my god. My... ugh! Okay. Well, we're doing Ask Shmanners, and we're gonna answer 'em. This is part 2.

Teresa: This is part 2 of our question-asking show. Um... [sighs]

Travis: It is! Oh my god, it's Groundhog Day.

Teresa: Yes, there's no S.

Travis: Oh my god. My life's been a lie.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: My life has been a lie.

Teresa: I'm sorry about that?

Travis: Oh my god. [sighs]

Teresa: Is it better that I tell you?

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: Okay, great.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Would you like a question?

Travis: I'd love a question.

Teresa: "My friend recommended this show/book/podcast to me, and I just didn't like it."

Travis: Was it My Brother, My Brother, and Me? It's not for everybody.

Teresa: "How do I talk to them about it without ruining their enjoyment of it?"

Travis: This is tough, right? Like, this is, um... I've talked with Teresa about this a lot recently where I... for whatever combination of psychosis and neurosis that I have, I have spent my life trying to develop, "How do I say this to this person without hurting their feelings, or them being upset at me?" Basically, how do I address this thing without this person liking me any less? If possible, liking me more would be the ideal scenario.

Um, so this is definitely something. But what I've started saying to kind of preempt this is saying, like, "I can see where this is a really, like—" like, TV show-wise, right?

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: Like, here's a big one for me. I watched the first episode of Breaking Bad.

Teresa: Right.

Travis: And it stressed me out so much watching it. And I was like, "This is an amazingly written show. It is wonderfully produced, incredibly acted. It is not for me."

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: And so when talking to people and they're like, "Well, you've watched Breaking Bad, right?"

And I'm like, "No. I've watched the first episode, and I see where it is an amazing show, but for me it's like I'm having an allergic reaction to it." And that's how I kind of try to describe it, right? Of like, you can eat tree nuts all day long and be fine, but if this person eats tree nuts they have an allergic reaction. It doesn't mean tree nuts are bad.

Teresa: Right. Um, sometimes what happens is a friend will recommend a show or a podcast or a book to me, and I—I kind of just, like, nip it in the bud. And I'm like, "Hey, that sounds great. I probably won't watch it, though." [laughs quietly]

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: I probably won't read it, I probably won't listen to it. It doesn't sound like something I'm interested in, but thanks for the recommendation. Right? Like, that happens to me a lot. It happened to me for, like, Game of Thrones, right? When everyone was watching or reading Game of Thrones and I was like, "It's not my bag, baby. So, like, probably not."

Travis: Yeah. I can see, though, where the... alternate, uh, kind of side of this question is, right? Mine is assuming you watched something like Breaking Bad, right? Where it's just, like, an amazingly made show that's not for you. But imagine it's like a show you watch where you're like, "This is not good," Right? Like, this is a dumb show, right? That happens too, right? Because different people like different things. Like, there is definitely some forms of, like, stupid comedy that I like that it's like, yeah, man. Listen. This isn't this person's sense of humor, so to them it would just seem dumb, right? Or like, to them they would watch—

Like, for example we both enjoy the show Red Dwarf, which is public access, Britain, you know. And so the sets were, like, cardboard and plastic and everything, right?

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: And it looked like it was shot on the worst quality film ever made, right? But it's like, okay, yeah, I can see where it looks cheesy and bad or whatever, but we really, really like it 'cause it's funny and clicked with us in this way.

But somebody else watching it for whom that style of comedy or whatever didn't click would be like, "This looks like crap and it's, like, cheesy and stuff."

And you're like, "Oh, okay. Yeah."

Teresa: Well, yeah, it does, you're right. But it's also—we love it, so.

Travis: So I could see where, you know, you watch something that your friend is like, "Oh my god, this is the funniest show ever," or "I love this," and then they're like, "What did you think?"

And what you honestly thought was, "That wasn't funny," or "Those actors are terrible," or "The writing is terrible," or whatever. And how do you address that?

Teresa: Well, so I think that you can always find one sort of thing to start the conversation that's good, right?

Travis: "I love the costumes."

Teresa: So, like, [crosstalk]—

Travis: "The lighting was so good."

Teresa: They talk about—in acting they talk about roses and thorns, right? So lead with the roses, right? Say something that you could get behind about it, right? And then I would suggest that you follow up with a question. Saying, like, "What is it that you really love about this show? What's your favorite part?" So that they can start to talk about the things that they like about it. And then maybe you can have, like, a constructive conversation about the thing. "Oh yeah, that actually was really cool. I'm really confused about plot point B, C, whatever."

Um, but like, I think the important part is when you talk to this friend again, and this conversation comes up, you don't lead with, "I hated it, bruh!" Right?

So, like—'cause that can really make people feel, like, sad. [laughs quietly]
You know? Like—

Travis: You never want someone to feel like they're wrong for liking it. Right?

Teresa: Exactly.

Travis: 'Cause it's a lot harder, I think, to defend something you like if the reason you like it is, "It makes me happy." Right? Because that's hard. That's, like, an opinion, right? Where if you're like, "This is an Emmy-winning show that everybody's talking about," then it's hard to be like, "It's bad," right? You get what I'm saying.

Teresa: Well, so at least if you can get your friend to talk about the reasons they like it and the reasons why they suggested it to you, maybe you can kind of deconstruct it a little bit and be like, "Okay, well, I under—yeah, that seems just like your sense of humor. It wasn't really for me."

So I think that, you know, as long as you don't... [laughs quietly] put anybody down, like, yuck anybody's yums, it's a good idea to kind of, like, make a conversation about it.

Travis: Now, on the other side of this, right? I want to get to the root of the issue and tell you all about something I've learned in 84 years on this earth.

Teresa: 8—what?

Travis: Sorry, uh, 39. Forget I said anything. [laughs quietly]

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Um, I am somebody who I—man, when I'm into a show or a movie or whatever, right? I'm into it, right?

Teresa: Oh yeah.

Travis: Hyper fixation gets me there. I'm loving it. Oh my god, this is the greatest thing I've ever seen, right? And the thing I had to learn is the difference between "I want this person to watch this show because I like it

and want somebody else to be watching it with me," versus "Hey, you should watch this show because you would like it."

Teresa: See, this is a fine line that you walk, because there have been a couple of TV shows that you have attempted to kind of, like, silently get me to watch by just, like, putting it on in the background or while you're doing something else.

Travis: [simultaneously] It's still the most effective method, I don't know what to tell you.

Teresa: But it doesn't always work.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: It didn't work with *The Bear*. You watched a lot of those and I was like, "Ugh, too much. I just can't handle it." Right?

Travis: Sure.

Teresa: But it did work with, uh—what was—[sighs]

Travis: You want me to just start naming 'em off? *What We Do in the Shadows*.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Uh, *Parks and Recreation*.

Teresa: Did it—no, it didn't do it with—you didn't... did you introduce me to *Parks and Rec*?

Travis: Well, so—yes, because we tried to watch the first season first.

Teresa: Oh, yes.

Travis: And you were like, "I simply cannot."

Teresa: Yes. And then [crosstalk].

Travis: And I was like, "Okay, okay, okay, okay." And I waited, like, a calendar year.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: And then I put on, like, episode one of season 2 just like, [unintelligible mumbling], and then pretty soon you loved it and we watched the entire thing, and you did not watch the first season until after the finale had aired and we watched that. And you were like, "Now we can go back and watch the first cursed season."

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: Um... I think we both came into Bob's Burgers at the same time. Um... Sirens was one that I think I put on and then you got into with me. Other stuff. Anyways.

Teresa: Other stuff, anyways.

Travis: This is all struck. But it is a really tough decision. Because listen, if you are excited about a show, right? And you love it very much, of course you want to share it. Of course you do. It's just when you're telling someone about it, right?

There are shows—Justin and Griffin and I do this all the time, right? There are shows where it's just like, "I promise you, if you—" like... of all the people on earth, better than—how I know you, I know what Justin and Griffin like in a movie and TV show, right?

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: And the number of times that one of us has said to other one, "If you can make it to episode three, or you can make it past episode four," or whatever, "This is the greatest show for you that's ever been."

Right? And we're always right. But sometimes it's pushing them to get them. And just like, "Oh, I know, I know, I know, I know." "Oh, I know, but if you can just make it to episode three!"

That happened—me and Griffin I think talking to Justin about Our Flag Means Death.

Teresa: Oh yeah.

Travis: To be like, "You just gotta make it to episode three! If you just make it to episode three!" And we were right.

Teresa: And now he loves it.

Travis: But that is like, we would not—but that is a level of trust that is built on... I wouldn't be telling you to watch this show or play this game or read this book or whatever if I didn't honestly think you'd like it.

Teresa: And... if your friend honestly doesn't like it, then that's okay too, 'cause you can still love them.

Travis: Next question.

Teresa: Alright. "I completely forgot to bring a gift to my cousin's baby shower. I know I have—"

Travis: Out of the will!

Teresa: "I know I have a whole year to get someone a wedding gift, but how does it work for a baby shower?" What's your guess?

Travis: What's my guess?

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: Three months.

Teresa: No.

Travis: By the time the baby's walking.

Teresa: No. There really is no rule.

Travis: Aww, man! It was a trick question!

Teresa: It is a trick question.

Travis: Ahhh.

Teresa: So, I mean, like the question-asker said, usually wedding gift is a year, right? And same thing with thank you notes. But also, you don't even have to make sure that you get them the gift before the baby is born.

Travis: I'll tell you this right now, frankly. Especially if it's first baby, we did not know what we needed.

Teresa: Yeah, that's true.

Travis: Until after said baby was born. There's all kinds of stuff that I bought that I was like, "[gruff voice] This is gonna make life easier."

And I don't know why I just did a Beetlejuice impression. But—and then I did it and I was like, "Actually, this is making my life dra—" don't buy an owl sock! I'm sorry, owl sock founders if you're listening. But I bought one of those, and it is just an anxiety machine.

Teresa: It did—it did make things harder.

Travis: Every time my child, I don't know, twitched, moved, breathed, thought about moving, the alarm would go off, 'cause the sock was too big and shifted around on her foot. Anyways.

Teresa: Anyways.

Travis: I would say... what you can give said cousin is, like, a coupon. And listen, I don't always advocate as coupons for presents. But free babysitting? Like, I'll come, I'll watch the kid, the baby, while you take a nap, while you go see a movie, while you go out to dinner, whatever, is maybe the most useful thing I think, in my opinion, you could provide for somebody.

Teresa: I would say to build on that, maybe if it's a very young baby, the coupon is for free, like, service in the way of like, "Can I come over and cook you dinner while you hold the baby? Can I clean your apartment?"

Travis: Can I just sit with you so you have another adult to talk to while you're, like, feeding this baby or, like, hanging out, you know, whatever, so that you can also feel like a person and not just a parent?

Teresa: Sure. Sure. Uh, yeah. So there are lots of options for this. Um, but here's the thing, right? [pause]

Travis: What's the thing?

Teresa: The thing is... in this situation...

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: You can reach out to the family and be honest. And be like, "Hey. Listen, I'm sorry I forgot to bring you one. But... is there anything you didn't get at the shower that's still on your list and you'd really like?"

Travis: God, "What do you need?"

Teresa: "Or anything that you haven't been able to buy for yourself yet that you might need you know, even after the baby is born?" You know,

maybe they have lots of onesies but they want, like, DoorDash gift coupons or whatever, right?

Travis: Sure. Everybody always needs diapers.

Teresa: I'm sure that if you check in they'll be grateful. And you don't have to tell them about it at the party. If you forget your gift—usually what happens, right? People come in, they have their coats or whatever, maybe they brought food, they brought a gift. And the gift goes on a table or something, right? For later.

Travis: Yeah. And you can swap cards—

Teresa: No.

Travis: —to put your own name on someone else's present. Boom.

Teresa: Nope. No.

Travis: Done. I've watched sitcoms, babe. It always works out.

Teresa: Just don't say anything.

Travis: Oh, okay.

Teresa: A lot of times now people aren't even opening gifts at the party because it's a lot of pressure to perform. [laughs] Right?

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: And to say, "Oh, thank you, I love it!" Even if you don't.

Travis: Can you loudly announce when someone opens a present that they really love, "That's from both of us."

Teresa: [laughs loudly] Is it really from both of you?

Travis: No.

Teresa: Then yeah, so is it not from both of you? Then no. [laughs]

Travis: Okay, I see.

Teresa: I think that there is some—there's some gray areas when you're siblings. But...

Travis: Yes, Justin does this to me all the time.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: 'Cause I've made a habit now—it started when we flew with babies, right? And we would buy, like, boxes of chocolate for flight attendants. Basically as kind of a bribe to be like, "Hey, if my baby cries... please—I'm sorry."

Or also so that they would then come over and be like, "Look how well behaved this baby is!"

Teresa: I love doing that!

Travis: It's so great. So wonderful.

Teresa: It's really great.

Travis: So now I still do it 'cause it makes people happy, and flight attendants, god knows, if you keep—pay attention are having it rough out there. And now every time I'm traveling with Justin and I hand them, he just goes, "That's from both of us."

Teresa: Ah. [laughs]

Travis: Ugh.

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: The worst.

Teresa: And, you know, better late than never, so. People really appreciate presents.

Travis: Um, you know what I appreciate?

Teresa: What?

Travis: A word from another Max Fun show.

[theme music plays]

[music plays]

Speaker 1: If you need a laugh and you're on the go, try S-T-O-P-P-O-D-C-A-S-T-I—

[music stops]

Speaker 1: Ugh. Hmm.

Speaker 2: Oh, you're trying to put the name of the podcast there?

Speaker 1: Yeah, I'm trying to spell it. But it's tricky.

Speaker 2: Let me give it a try.

Speaker 1: Okay.

[music plays]

Speaker 2: If you need a laugh and you're on the go, call S-T-O-P-P-P-A-D...

[music stops]

Speaker 2: Ahh, it'll never fit.

Speaker 1: No, it will! Let me try.

[music plays]

Speaker 1: If you need a laugh and you're on the go, try S-T-O-P-P-P-D-C-O-O.

[music stops]

Speaker 1: Ugh! We are so close.

[music plays]

Speaker 2: Stop Podcasting Yourself.

Speaker 1: A Podcast from Maximumfun.org.

Speaker 2: If you need a laugh and you're on the go.

[music and ad end]

[music plays]

Ify: I'm Ify Nwadiwe, the host of Maximum Film.

Alonso: I'm Alonso Duralde, also the host of Maximum Film.

Drea: And I'm Drea Clarke, yet another host of Maximum Film. Every week we hosts huddle up.

Ify: Usually with an illustrious guest.

Alonso: And we talk about films.

Ify: We have film news.

Alonso: We have film quizzes.

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Together: Maximum Film!

Ify: Film.

Speaker 4: Maximum Film: the movie podcast that's not just a bunch of straight white guys. New episodes weekly on Maximumfun.org.

[music and ad end]

Travis: Give me another question, question deliverer.

Teresa: Alright. [clears throat] Is it appropriate to make a registry for a life event that isn't a baby or a wedding?

Travis: Yes?

Teresa: It is, actually!

Travis: Yeah!

Teresa: And this is a growing trend, okay? The idea—

Travis: I'm a growing trend.

Teresa: [laughs] Yes you are.

Travis: I've been eating my vegetables and drinking my milk! I'm a growing trend!

Teresa: We don't really drink milk, but...

Travis: I drink—I dr—I have been known to drink milk. Sometimes.

Teresa: [laughs] A singular milk. Anyway.

Travis: Sometimes.

Teresa: Anyway. Um, the idea is that people have different milestones that aren't exclusively tied to these traditional, like, marriage or having kids or even buying a house, right? A lot of people don't do that anymore, and everyone deserves presents! So—

Travis: Well, especially if it's a thing that someone wants to do presents for, right?

Teresa: Right.

Travis: Because here's the thing. Here's the thing. The thing? Let me tell you what the thing is. If you—you have an itchy eye, and it makes it seem like you're winking a code at me.

Teresa: [laughs] I'm not. It's just so itchy!

Travis: It's your allergies, I know. The sneeze attack got you. But now it looks like you're trying to send me a message through Morse code.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: So... the thing about it is, like, if you are someone where it's just like—if your list of presents you would like to receive has shifted from things that I want to things that I need, which I think is, like, a thing that happens to adults, at least most adults I know. We're you're like, "What don't you want for your birthday?"

I'm like, "I've got most of the stuff I want," right? And it's just like—

Teresa: "But I could use some new socks."

Travis: Right. Like, don't—hey, don't buy me video games. I buy the video games I want, or whatever. Right? Then doing any kind of, like, "Here's an actual factual list," is so useful. My family over time, especially as we've, like, added new people in through marriages and birth and all that stuff, we've shifted from being the type of people where buying presents for each other is a test of how well you know the person to, like, "Just tell me what you need," right? "Give me a list," right?

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: So that when I get you something I know you haven't already bought it for yourself. I know that it's something you'll use. I know all that stuff.

Teresa: Yeah. Um—

Travis: My 40th's coming around. Should I do—

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: —should I do a registry and make it public, and people can just send me presents, right? People love doing that. Sending presents to people they don't know?

Teresa: We'll talk about this off air.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Um, so here are some great registry ideas that we have for you, listeners. If you're going off to college, if you're moving to your first apartment by yourself or home, if you are getting your PHD, if you just got a new pet, if you are reaching a huge career milestone, if you're getting divorced. Odds are you might need some stuff, 'cause it probably gets divided up.

You know, there are—

Travis: Well, let me throw this out. You're going on, like, a long trip, right? I'm gonna be traveling for six months or like, I'm going on a mission trip somewhere, or I'm taking a year off to backpack through Europe and I need stuff, right? It's a great time to get a bunch of gift cards, right?

Teresa: Absolutely, 'cause people want to help you. And they don't know how. So making a registry or even like an Amazon wish list or whatever, right? Gives people the great ideas of the things that you'll actually use and actually want. And one website we looked at even floated the idea [laughs quietly] of having a perpetual registry, which I think is a lot like an Amazon wish list, right? Where people can just always go to, like, buy the gifts for any occasion.

Travis: I love that.

Teresa: Is it your birthday? Is it Christmas? Is it, you know, your, I don't know, quinceañera or whatever, right?

Travis: One of the things I've started—

Teresa: You always have this list going, and it works really great for kids too, 'cause they say "I want this." And I say, "You don't need that." And they say, "But I want it." And I say, "I'll put it on your list."

Travis: And sometimes, we're not gonna lie, that is, like, kind of an ephemeral list of the mind, right? Where you're like, "I'll put it on the list," and then we take no further action.

Teresa: I do put—I do!

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: I do put in on their lists.

Travis: 90% of the time, that is absolutely true. But there are times where we're walking through a store and a child's like, "I would like that ten gallon bucket of slime," right?

Teresa: [laughs] Right.

Travis: And you're like, "Yeah, I'll put it on the list."

Teresa: Dottie has this idea—

Travis: And then just keep walking.

Teresa: —that she needs a slime collection.

Travis: She has convinced herself that Charlie McElroy has 1,000 slimes. That is her, like, reference point where she's like, "Charlie has a slime collection with 1,000 slimes."

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: "And I only have, like, five," or whatever. I'm like, "You only play with one at a time. How many do—you have two hands. At most you need two slimes."

Teresa: [laughs] Anyway.

Travis: Anyway.

Teresa: Here is something—

Travis: Can I tell you my favorite thing to ask for from you?

Teresa: Oh, oh, sure. Okay.

Travis: I like to ask for permission to buy things I want to buy for myself. Right?

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: I recently—I looked at Teresa yesterday and I was like, "Hey. For my 40th I want to buy myself a machete."

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: I want a kukri machete! They're really cool, and I've been doing a lot more yard work recently, cutting down weeds and stuff. And I'm like, I want to feel like I'm hacking my way through the jungle. If I could please have a machete. And you don't even have to buy it for me. Just give me permission to buy it for myself. [laughs]

Teresa: [laughs] That's another thing we'll talk about off air.

Travis: Okay. Because you want to say yes so badly?

Teresa: Um... here is—

Travis: Moving on, okay, got it.

Teresa: Here's something you may have thought about. What if your great-aunt Mildred, or your mother in law, or your cousin or whatever, doesn't like the idea of you having a registry for things that aren't baby or wedding?

Travis: Ask for money?

Teresa: No.

Travis: Oh.

Teresa: Forget it. Just forget it! They don't have to look at it. If they don't want to see it, that's fine. You didn't, like, send out cards asking for presents. People who want to give you things can go to this place to look at the things that you want. I think that that is okay, and you're okay.

Travis: Now, I will say this, too. Addendum to that. If there are people in your life who are like, "But I want to get you stuff. I don't want a list," right?

Teresa: Okay, then don't go on the list!

Travis: No, but here's the addendum. Put vague, like, "Okay, well I've just gotten into, like... " I don't know. "I've gotten into home brewing," right? So... stuff associated with that. I already have this, and this, and this. So... go for it, right?

To give 'em almost, like, idea starters, right? Or, like, "I've been doing a lot of gardening recently." So let that, right? Inform your decisions. Right? So that way they're still kind of in the right ballpark, without it being like, "Why would you think... I'd be into beekeeping? I'm allergic to bees," or whatever, right? List off all your allergies.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Don't get me—don't get me a peanut butter making kit. You know [laughs quietly] I'm allergic to butter.

Teresa: It is very easy to make peanut butter. Did you know that?

Travis: Please don't say that in front of our children, 'cause anytime they've had a peanut they were like, "Smush. Peanut butter."

I'm like, "Guys... "

Teresa: [laughs] That's not quite it.

Travis: That's just peanut dust. Now, here's the thing I wanted to talk about. This is a question I had that many might have, because I saw it going around TikTok, by which I mean I saw one video and one response video. So that's the circle.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: [laughs] That's the circle.

Teresa: That's around.

Travis: That's around. And it's about stacking plates. When you're eating at a restaurant and you're done eating, should you stack plates for the server to collect, right?

Now, I have, in the past, I've worked in two restaurants. Neither one was I would say, like, high volume, right? I was working at a restaurant that was like a breakfast restaurant in a hotel. And I worked at, like, a coffee shop restaurant here in Cincinnati. And so when I saw this my first thing was like, "Yeah, stack the plates. Makes it easier to carry. Why wouldn't you do that?"

And I stack the plates, right? Because I want it to be easier for the person to pick up, and I always feel weird being like, "Now you clean up in front of me," like I'm some kind of dainty king. And I'm a dainty king in other ways, not in that way, so we looked it up.

Teresa: [laughs] Yes. So, um, there are certain polls on the internet that say that servers are pretty split on this. But overwhelmingly the articles point out that you should not, because there are several reasons.

Travis: Yes. Reason number one, if I may—

Teresa: Go ahead.

Travis: —which I really did not think about, is that it sends a signal when you stack your plates of "I had to do this myself. I've been waiting for

somebody to collect these plates, and service is slow. Like, they should've come and collected these and now I—" right? It makes them—

Teresa: And whether or not that's the case is something different. But it shows the server that there was a need that was not filled, right? So they may feel like you are trying to tell them something, that they're doing a bad job. It doesn't matter if you are or not, right? This is the perception that they're getting.

Travis: I should also—sorry to interrupt.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: I've never interrupted you before—

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: —so sorry to do it for the first time. But I do want to throw the caveat here where if you're listening to this and you're like, "I'm a server and I love it when people stack plates."

I—I—as with all things on Shmanners, we are not saying that if you stack plates, 100% of the time it's considered rude. What we are saying is, if you are like, "Ooh, what's the majority opinion? If I wanted to be on the safe side of this, what should I do? I don't know what to do. What should I do?"

This is the majority kind of feeling right now.

Teresa: And I always think that there are little caveats, right? If you have a small table and you're running out of room and you need to stack the plates in order to continue eating, I think that's fine. Right? Also, if there's no—one of the things that was brought up a lot in the articles is the idea of the silverware getting in the way, right? Stacking the silverware, having the touch—the servers having to touch parts of the silverware that they don't necessarily want to, maybe the part that's been in your mouth or whatever, right? Um, so if you stack a plate, like you stack your bread plate maybe that doesn't have any silverware associated with it, or your appetizer plate

that doesn't have any silverware associated. I think that is fine. It's just fine, because there's nothing to, like, get in the way.

You also have to consider if there's food left on your plate.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Because stacking a plate that still has food on it not only makes the bottom of the plate that's on top of it yucky, but it also makes it more difficult to carry, right?

Travis: Hmm, might be slippery.

Teresa: Might be slippery. So you would never want to, like, scrape food from one plate to the other at your table. That is not considered good manners. So if there is food left on the plate, definitely no stacking, right?

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: And, you know, we go out to dinner quite often. We're very, uh, fortunate to have a long term sitter who helps us out.

Travis: Well, and we travel a lot for work.

Teresa: And we travel a lot. And so I think that... we always are thinking about, what does the server want? And the fact of the matter is... they are trained to pick up plates in a certain way, to stack plates in a certain way, and sometimes, you know, you're well intentioned, but it might be more trouble than it's worth to do that.

Travis: I also saw a thing that I also didn't think about that—servers talking about that they've run into situations where people have stacked plates and they've gone to collect them, and then the person's like, "Oh, I'm not done eating that." And they had just, like, stacked plates to have more room I guess, or whatever, but were still eating off the plate?

Teresa: Oh...

Travis: Anyways, don't do it.

Teresa: Don't do that.

Travis: If you feel like, "Oh, I want to do something to help the server," tip really well.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Right? We still, for better or for worse, live in, here in the United States, like, 98.9% tipping culture. So if you're like, "Oh my god, there's so many plates here. I feel so bad. This person had to carry so much."

Increase the size of the tip. That's the best way to show appreciation to your server. Uh, say thank you. Be kind. Be patient. And tip very well.

Um, I want to tell you about some things coming up. First of all—first of all, Travis—let me interrupt myself.

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: It's the first time I've ever done that.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: I usually don't interrupt. I want to say thank you to Alexx, our researcher, without whom we would not be able to make this show. I want to say thank you to Rachel, our editor, without whom we would not be able to make this show. And we want to say thank you to you for listening, and sending in questions. We couldn't make the show without you either.

Now, I've had an idea. Speaking of sending in questions—tell me what you think about this.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: Since that idea came from TikTok, if you find a TikTok about etiquette that you would like us to comment on, right? Whether we stitch it on TikTok or we talk about it on the show, you can email a link to that TikTok to our shmannerscast@gmail.com account and maybe we'll talk about it on TikTok and say thank you.

Teresa: Ooh!

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: I like that.

Travis: Also wanted to let you know, coming up we've got some 20 Sun and Sea Surf the Vibe shows. Uh, My Brother, My Brother, and Me is gonna be in Philadelphia on October 11th. Adventure Zone is doing a hootenanny show, which is our country band singing adventure show. What a great way to say that.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Uh, that's gonna be October 12th at New York Comic Con, and October 13th at New York Comic Con we're doing My Brother, My Brother, and Me with Sawbones opening.

New York Comic Con, by the way, is no longer requiring a badge to attend these shows. If you do have a badge and a ticket to either show, you will receive a free show poster as well as the option for priority seating at the event. Uh, there is badge-free, like, tickets available to watch a video on demand of the show online. Get all that info and more at bit.ly/mcelroytours.

Also, if you go to mcelroy.family and click on events at the top, if you're listening to this either Friday, Saturday, or Sunday, I am at Rose City Comic Con this weekend in Portland. You can come see me.

What else, Teresa?

Teresa: We always thank Brent "brentalfloss" Black for writing our theme music, which is available as a ringtone where those are found.

Also, thank you to Bruja Betty Pinup Photography for the cover picture of our fan-run Facebook group, Shmanners Fanners. If you love to give and get excellent advice from other fans, go ahead and join that group today.

And to reiterate, please continue to send us your topic suggestions, and your questions, and your TikToks, now!

Travis: Sure.

Teresa: Shmannerscast@gmail.com, and make sure you say hi to Alexx, 'cause she reads every one.

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

Teresa: No RSVP required!

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

Teresa: Manners, Shmanners. Get it?

[theme music plays]

[chord]

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