

## Shmanners 385: Wrapping Paper

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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? We never talk anymore.

**Teresa:** Well, let me tell you.

**Travis:** Please.

**Teresa:** Let me tell you how I am.

**Travis:** Please.

**Teresa:** I am a little holiday stressed.

**Travis:** Oh?

**Teresa:** Yeah, we need to sit down and order our presents.

**Travis:** It'll happen. Listen—

**Teresa:** It hasn't yet.

**Travis:** Christmas magic comes and Christmas magic comes. Maybe everybody gets \$20. We'll see.

**Teresa:** Um, I mean, I could just go down to the thrift store and buy people some crap.

**Travis:** Well, I don't— I'd rather have \$20 than some crap.

**Teresa:** Oh, okay. All right. \$20 it is, 100 tiny baskets of \$20 bills.

**Travis:** How many people do you think we know? I'm not giving 100 people presents.

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** Like 20 max. In fact, I'm gonna cut it off. Anybody, once you get past a certain age, no presents from me anymore. 'Cause I don't wanna cut the kids off. But does Dad really need stuff anymore?

**Teresa:** No, I mean the answer is...

**Travis:** He's got so much stuff.

**Teresa:** ... no. We don't need any stuff either.

**Travis:** Actually, I think a good Christmas present for Carol would be if we took stuff away from Dad.

**Teresa:** That probably would be great, yeah.

**Travis:** Hey Carol, if you're listening, surprise. Um...

**Teresa:** But you know what my, what I'm not—

**Travis:** Hold on, I wanna tell you about.

**Teresa:** [stutters]

**Travis:** I wanna tell you about the thing that we came up with. Um, oh, it's not out yet. I don't think I can talk about it yet. 'Cause I think it's in the Candle—

In the Candlenights special this year, Griffin comes up with a solution for, like, Candlenights gift-giving when someone has too much stuff or you can't think of something to give someone. And it's absolute genius. And my only regret is that I feel like people are gonna learn about it too late for this year.

**Teresa:** Oh.

**Travis:** But you'll be able to implement this new gift-giving system in 2024, so.

**Teresa:** But you know what I really do like about gift-giving?

**Travis:** You love wrapping presents.

**Teresa:** I love wrapping presents.

**Travis:** See, this is why another reason you and I are a good couple, opposites attract, as the scientist Paula Abdul once said.

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** Because I love buying presents. I love spending money.

**Teresa:** Yes.

**Travis:** You don't like spending money.

**Teresa:** Yes.

**Travis:** You don't like the presents. I like, I see a thing and I'm immediately like, "that's what they're getting." I don't second guess it. I don't third guess it. I barely even guess it at all. But then it's like, now you got to wrap these. And I'm like, "oh, who has the time?"

**Teresa:** I love wrapping presents. I love staying up late to wrap presents.

**Travis:** Oh, God.

**Teresa:** I love thinking about wrapping presents.

**Travis:** You like homework, that's gross.

**Teresa:** [giggles] No, it's art!

**Travis:** Yeah, I will say—

**Teresa:** I'm gonna tell you about how artful it is.

**Travis:** You are legitimately amazing at wrapping presents. Can I tell everybody first what Dottie said she wanted to get Bebe for Christmas, because it tickled me pink?

**Teresa:** All right.

**Travis:** I was talking to Bebe, or to Dot, who's almost four, and I was like, "okay, Dot, I think this year you can pick out presents for people." And like, I was talking to about, like, her aunts and her cousins and everything.

But my favorite was, I said, "what do you want to get Bebe?" And without missing a beat, she had the answer locked and loaded. I said, "what do you want to get Bebe for Christmas?" And she said, "her own bag of seashells." What? First of all, the qualifier of her own bag of seashells. As if you, me, and Dot all have bags of seashells and Bebe just hasn't earned hers yet.

But she just knew, her own bag of seashells. And then I was like, "well, what about," because Bebe loves soaps shaped like things, I was like, "what about soaps shaped like seashells?"

And it was like, she and I were in a boardroom, we're coming up with a brand new product. I was like, "what about seashells that are shaped like— or soaps shaped like seashells?" And she was like, "yeah, that's it." And she was so excited. Tickled me to no end. How do you wrap seashells?

**Teresa:** I don't know.

**Travis:** One at a time?

**Teresa:** [laughs] No, you need a box.

**Travis:** Yeah, because you could guess that right away.

**Teresa:** Yeah.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** Um, so let's go over a brief history of shiny paper.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** So the practice of concealing a gift in paper goes back almost 2000 years.

**Travis:** To when the wise men showed up and they're like, "you'll never guess. It's frankincense." And Mary was like, "I wasn't gonna guess that."

**Teresa:** No.

**Travis:** Oh, okay.

**Teresa:** There is a thought that it kind of went in and out of style...

**Travis:** Is it Frank's incense because that makes a lot more sense, right?

**Teresa:** No. Mm-mm.

**Travis:** "I brought you some of Frank's famous incense."

**Teresa:** We're moving— We're moving on.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** So sometimes you wanted to show how your wealth and status allowed you to give a person a gift so you wouldn't wrap it so that they would know right away how awesome you are, right?

**Travis:** Sure.

**Teresa:** But that is about the gift giver, not the gift receiver, right?

**Travis:** Sure, yeah.

**Teresa:** So then also, if you want the gift receiver to be pleasantly surprised, you wanna wrap it somehow.

**Travis:** Sure.

**Teresa:** You could wrap it in cloth. There's evidence—

**Travis:** Fancy cloth?

**Teresa:** Fancy cloth. There is evidence of Korean people using bojagi, a traditional wrapping cloth, to cover their gifts during the Three Kingdoms period.

**Travis:** Sure.

**Teresa:** And these wrapping cloths were primarily practical because they weren't just used for presents. They were used to carry things, like clothes or books or foods. But, I mean, it wasn't entirely utilitarian. The traditional folk cloth is still deeply entwined with Korean culture and is used in everything, from gift wrapping to weddings to Buddhist rites, all sorts of things.

**Travis:** Do you, because we've been using some, like, reusable kind of stretchy things...

**Teresa:** We have, yep.

**Travis:** ... and I enjoy those immensely for obvious reasons. It simplifies wrapping, creates less waste. I do like to still wrap some things for the girls...

**Teresa:** Yes.

**Travis:** ... so that they still get the like, [imitates ripping paper] ripping it apart kind of thing.

**Teresa:** And you don't get that with cloth. I mean, with this kind of style of wrapping, right? You do get to unfold it. Um, not like with those ones that I found that are more like bags that are kind of stretchy.

Um, so these Korean cloths also are symbolic, right? It symbolizes the value that you wish upon the recipient. So like a value such as luck or protection or prosperity or longevity.

**Travis:** It also feels a lot like, you know, when people give you like moving hacks and they're like, you can wrap things, gentle things in socks, in t-shirts.

**Teresa:** That's right.

**Travis:** It's like, hey, if you're gonna do it, why not do it with something that's, like, beautiful or reusable or practical in some way? Which I do kind of like. We need to start wrapping Christmas presents in T-shirts, right? "I got you a T-shirt, but that's not all. Look inside."

**Teresa:** That is a great idea, and we'll cover more of that later.

**Travis:** Oh, okay, ooh-la-la.

**Teresa:** There's a similar practice in Japanese culture, and that is furoshiki. And the name translates to bath spread because this cloth was originally used by high-class visitors who had packed their belongings in them before they visited a bathhouse.

**Travis:** Oh, okay.

**Teresa:** And usually they were emblazoned with family crests, but these reusable cloths are found in a variety of patterns today, and people in Japan still use it because it is a reusable wrap, right?

**Travis:** Mm-hmm.

**Teresa:** Environmentally conscious. But I mean, it is fancy, but you don't use it anymore to show off how fancy you are.

**Travis:** I mean, listen, if we wrap anything these days, there's still a little bit of like, "look how good this is," right?

**Teresa:** Yeah.

**Travis:** When like, whether it's wrapping paper or things like, I'm sure that there are some people who are like, "I use newspaper" or whatever, right?

**Teresa:** Yeah.

**Travis:** But there's definitely people who are like, "check out this cloth."

**Teresa:** Wrapping paper in the iteration that we know it today, where do you think that tradition comes from?

**Travis:** Germany, no, England, no?

**Teresa:** In the...

**Travis:** 1860s.

**Teresa:** Victorian era.

**Travis:** I was close. Is that 1860s?

**Teresa:** It's a lot of the 1800s.

**Travis:** Yes, okay, great.



**Teresa:** So it was practiced by the luxury class, right? Because if you're gonna buy something to wrap the thing that you bought, it's gonna cost more money and also you're gonna throw it away, right?

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Teresa:** So it was kind of a display of wealth at that point, right?

**Travis:** Sure, yeah. I mean, it's literally disposable wealth, right? I have enough money to buy a thing that's gonna go in the garbage.

**Teresa:** Right.

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Teresa:** But this wasn't all. There was often, like, lace trimmings or ribbons or sprigs of spruce or berries or whatever, right? You would tuck that in there to decorate it.

**Travis:** And if there's one thing I know about Christmas, it's about the boxes, the bags, the tags, the ribbons, the frippery, that's what it's about.

**Teresa:** Victorians used to decorate their own more plain paper, right, in a process called marbling. You may have seen this when you're talking about water marbling nails, right?

**Travis:** Mm-hmm. Sure.

**Teresa:** Um, and so the paint is put on top of water in a small dish, and then you press the paper on top of it, which gives a kind of like swirly look, right?

**Travis:** Oh, sure, yeah. I've seen that with people doing it with helmets. Where they point the spray paint on top, and then they dip the helmet in.

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

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Teresa:** It was rather unwieldy because the paper was very thick, right? And scotch tape wasn't invented until 1930. So you had to kind of fold it or use wax and string and whatever it is to just, like, keep it in place, right? So that kind of paper was not practical for most people.

**Travis:** Sure.

**Teresa:** So tissue was a good option. Um, you know, or there were stores who offered to wrap in like manila paper. So this time period, the wrapping paper is available, but not widespread.

**Travis:** Sure.

**Teresa:** In fact...

**Travis:** Okay, yes.

**Teresa:** ... in this time period, there, like so many things, is a campaign against wrapping paper.

**Travis:** Sure.

**Teresa:** 1911—

**Travis:** Was it— It probably wasn't because it was wasteful though. That wasn't a concern. Was it, like—?

**Teresa:** I mean, it was a little bit. It was put as a shallow frivolity.

**Travis:** Oh, sure, sure. Yeah, not allowed to have fun.

**Teresa:** In 1911, there's a magazine called Hardware Dealers Magazine. Sounds like a barrel of fun.

**Travis:** Then it became Vogue. It changed to Vogue later.

**Teresa:** Oh no.

**Travis:** No, you don't think so?

**Teresa:** No, I don't think so.

**Travis:** No, you don't think— Okay.

**Teresa:** [laughs] It— It— What—

**Travis:** That doesn't usually happen where I make a joke and you just go, "No."

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** "Stop. Not that one. This is the line."

**Teresa:** [laughing] You sounded so sure and I wanted—

**Travis:** That's the joke!

**Teresa:** I wanted to make sure that you knew that was not correct or factual.

**Travis:** You were worried that I thought Hardware Dealer Monthly or whatever actually became Vogue.

**Teresa:** [laughing] I was.

**Travis:** Baby, are you okay?

**Teresa:** That's why I said no.

**Travis:** I joked too much apparently. My children, my wife worry about my sanity— The number of times I say, yesterday, Teresa and I went on a date when we came home and the babysitter was there with the kids and I walked in by myself and I said, "Oh no, I left mommy at the restaurant." And Dot goes, "Are you joking?" And I was like, "Yeah, buddy. Yeah, buddy."

**Teresa:** Oh no. Okay, this is the explicit instructions they printed for business owners. "Whatever your business, leave the freak wrapping paper to the other fellow..."

**Travis:** The freak?

**Teresa:** Yes, "... to the other fellow and you will make friends for your store by this means."

**Travis:** So you're cut— Wait.

**Teresa:** Yes.

**Travis:** So customers will appreciate that you don't have wrapping paper.

**Teresa:** Uh-huh.

**Travis:** That's weird.

**Teresa:** Yeah, I think so too. But we see this a lot, right? There's this whole kind of like, there's always a culture and a counterculture, there's always a clash.

**Travis:** It's just weird to think of wrapping paper as being culture and counterculture. Like that— It's wrapping paper, guys. Chill.

**Teresa:** This is when the going gets good. In the early 1900s...

**Travis:** Sure.

**Teresa:** ... there are two brothers from Kansas City, Missouri, who would make the business of wrapping paper explode.

**Travis:** Were their names Hall and Mark?

**Teresa:** No, their names were Joyce and Raleigh Hall.

**Travis:** Oh, I was so close though, right?

**Teresa:** You were so close. You were so close.

**Travis:** Right?

**Teresa:** No, it's Hallmark, it's Hallmark.

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Teresa:** Um, their first iteration of their store, unfortunately, burst into flames.

**Travis:** Too much paper.

**Teresa:** They had a stationary store in 1915, a fire completely destroyed the office and the inventory. But then they did set up shop again, and by 1917, they actually bought their own printing presses so they could manufacture Valentine's and Christmas cards, right? Because Hallmark started out as stationary, right?

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Teresa:** And that holiday season was when their entrepreneurial spirit really profited.

**Travis:** Oh, okay. I wanna hear more about this, but first, Teresa Murray?

**Teresa:** Yeah?

**Travis:** How about a thank you note for our sponsor?

**Teresa:** Awesome.

[theme music plays]

[ad break]

**Travis:** Teresa, I want you to know, I would marry you all over again.

**Teresa:** Yeah, but this time, could we do a better job? Could we do an easier job?

**Travis:** Wow, see, it's different when I— I was gonna make that joke, but then I'm like, "I'd marry you again," and you're like, "Could we do it better?"

**Teresa:** [laughing]

**Travis:** Oh, yes we could.

**Teresa:** A little less stress, that's what I'm after.

**Travis:** A little less stress in this dress. We could do that by working with Zola. Because when you're getting married, it's not just about the big day, it's about all the days along the way, and Zola is here for them and for you.

They have beautifully designed save the dates and invitations, beautiful wedding websites with a built-in registry, and Zola's design sets the scene for the kind of wedding it's gonna be, plus they can even suggest venues and vendors and make the experience even more memorable. We were doing it all on our own, like babes in the woods, getting married in the woods with babes. I don't know.

**Teresa:** I don't— I didn't like it.

**Teresa:** A tree performed the ceremony. It was wild stuff, but if we'd had Zola, we would have known step by step exactly what we needed to figure out and it would have been just that much easier. So, why don't you get started with Zola today?

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**Teresa:** Oh, short supply.

**Travis:** Yeah, listen, unless you're me, you probably don't have enough confidence to do stupid things on the internet. But let me give you some of that with Podia. Because Podia has a website builder that can host and sell online courses or digital downloads.

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**Griffin:** Folks, we get it. Keeping up with an actual play podcast in this economy is a tough sell. That's why we have great news for you. The Adventure Zone is changing up its format. We're going to be doing some shorter seasons, more experimental stuff. There's never been a better time to get on board the Zone.

**Travis:** And if you're sick of listening to our voices, we get that too. So we're including some guests on this upcoming one. We've got Kate Welch and Gabe Hicks, who are incredible.

**Clint:** And you want us to try out some new games? You got it. We've got the new Marvel Multiverse RPG. We're using that and with a really brilliant GM doing it.

**Travis:** It's Dad. What he's saying is it's Dad.

**Griffin:** Dad's just doing it.

**Travis:** It's Dad doing it.

**Griffin:** You can listen every Thursday on [MaximumFun.org](https://MaximumFun.org) or wherever you get your podcasts.

**Speaker:** I'm glad you said that because nobody says that.

**Speaker 2:** Can I just say thank you two for such a thoughtful interview?

**Speaker 3:** Oh my god, yeah, I think you nailed it.

**Jesse:** Bullseye, interviews with creators you love and creators you need to know. Listen to the Bullseye podcast only from NPR and Maximum Fun.

[ad break ends]

**Travis:** Okay, when last we left off, the Hallmark brothers were about to get stupid rich.

**Teresa:** Yeah, they were. So the store was doing great that holiday season. Really, really bang up job. Except they had run out with several weeks to go. They had run out of the tissue paper that they were using to wrap goods, right?

**Travis:** So they used toilet paper.

**Teresa:** No.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** They dug out some of their other stationary supplies. French paper lining.

**Travis:** [gasps] That sounds fancy.

**Teresa:** So if you've ever received a beautiful envelope, the envelope on the outside is very utilitarian, right? It's to keep everything together.

**Travis:** Sure.

**Teresa:** But on the inside of the envelope, you often find this very thin printed paper. It can be kind of waxy almost, right? And that is the liner.



And at this point, they were using French liner. So they were like, "this is what we got."

**Travis:** "This is what we got, deal with it."

**Teresa:** This might work. So they set out a stack of it next to the register, charged 10 cents apiece, which was about two and a half dollars, right? And so the customers, they loved it. They loved all of the different patterns. They loved the way that it... made like, it was easy to fold, that did crisp lines...

**Travis:** Because it was thin, yeah.

**Teresa:** ... because it was very thin, but it was very sturdy, because it was often kind of waxy, right?

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Teresa:** And so they were like, this is perfect. This really works. By the 1830s, they had added ribbons to their store.

**Travis:** Sure.

**Teresa:** And I mean, it just kept going. By 1958, they produced a promo film called the art of gift wrapping.

**Travis:** Ooh, la, la.

**Teresa:** This is amazing, this next fact. The person who starred in this video was K. King.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** Except K. King did not exist.

**Travis:** Oh? It was a woman made of wrapping paper.

**Teresa:** Well, no.

**Travis:** Oh.

**Teresa:** It was a persona, right? There were dozens of K. Kings. They employed women, told them all to say their name was K. King and they started hiring them out as gift stylists, right?

**Travis:** Get out of town.

**Teresa:** When Alex was researching this, she sent me a meme of Joo Dee. Do you remember Joo Dee from Avatar?

**Travis:** Yeah, yes.

**Teresa:** In the Earth Kingdom, Joo Dee was the kind of concierge, right?

**Travis:** Yes.

**Teresa:** But there was no one Joo Dee.

**Travis:** Yes.

**Teresa:** There was an army of Joo Dees.

**Travis:** Uh-huh.

**Teresa:** Right? That was K. King.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** So they would work for like six months a year doing things like, okay, so they would give, like, demonstrations, they would judge contests. People would put out, like, newspaper advertisements of, you know, like co-sponsoring the events and signups. And they had categories for like, most beautiful, most difficult, most clever or unusual wrapping, right?

**Travis:** Amazing.

**Teresa:** It is amazing. And these, they popped up all over the country. It

made Hallmark kind of like a household name everywhere.

**Travis:** Speaking of, can I tell you what? It's just occurred to me in all my years of hearing Hallmark, never connected... Like they used to be a stationary store. So it would be like you were buying paper with the Hall mark. Right? That this is like paper from, that has a Hall mark, because they're the Hall Brothers, right?

**Teresa:** Yeah.

**Travis:** And it's like, this is the mark of quality, Hallmark. It's always just like, it's Hallmark, you know, Hallmark. It's Hallmark, like it was always just, I've never thought about the origin of the name before in my entire life.

And surprisingly, I never will again. I'm gonna think about it right now, and then it will be gone from my brain by the time we finish recording.

**Teresa:** Okay, that's all I ask for.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** So then by the 1970s, it was estimated that over 2,000 viewers had seen one of the pretty miracles, quote, on television of K. King styling paper. And her message was simple. "It's not what you give, but how you give. Attractive and exciting gifts are doubly appealing and doubly appreciated."

**Travis:** It's not what you give. Ohh...

**Teresa:** I know, right?

**Travis:** Okay, uh-huh, all right. Also, I'd love if this was like now, because I'd love to watch the TikToks of like— "Is it just me? Or have you guys noticed, I think there's more than one K. King. Look at this video clip."

**Teresa:** [laughs] So, one estimate says that we now spend as much as \$2.6 billion annually on shiny paper, bows, boxes, and tags.

**Travis:** In the billions?

**Teresa:** I know, in Britain, one estimate showed that every single year, people use up to 226,800 miles of wrapping paper over the holidays.

**Travis:** Wow.

**Teresa:** That's enough to wrap the entire world nine times with a little bit left over.

**Travis:** I'm also willing to bet, and I haven't looked into it, but I've been using wrapping paper and unwrapping wrapping paper all my life, that the majority of that doesn't really recycle well.

**Teresa:** Correct. The majority of it doesn't. And there are critics who would say that it's too expensive and too wasteful and too impractical, really. But it is kind of art, right?

It can be something that really creates a feeling in a room, a beautifully wrapped gift under the tree, is a lot nicer to look at than a gift in like, crumpled tissue, right?

**Travis:** I mean, absolutely. I think that this is a lot of, like, the conversation of like, when you talk about recycling and conservation and reusing and all that stuff, it's like how much can we as individuals do? I bet you weren't expecting to hear this in this episode, were you folks?

How much can we as individuals do when there are corporations and factories and stuff who aren't doing it, right? So I'm not saying clearly wrapping paper is evil and we all need to stop using wrapping paper. It's just a certain amount of mindfulness, you know what I mean?

**Teresa:** Yeah.

**Travis:** That I agree with.

**Teresa:** So let's continue that as we talk about the etiquette.

**Travis:** Sure, yes please.

**Teresa:** So one of the things that you can do is you can purchase recyclable paper. Here are some ways to spot it if it's not particularly, like, on the wrap or whatever. Anything—

**Travis:** If it's not labeled as such.

**Teresa:** Right, if it's not labeled as recyclable. If it has foil, if it is coated in plastic. Like super shiny, right? If it has any kind of glitter on it, it is explicitly not recyclable.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** Okay? But one way to recycle is to reduce your waste, right? So some of these papers, these particularly, like plastic, like Mylar papers, if unwrapped delicately can be reused. Sure. And that's the trade-off, right? If you find the very kind of like thin paper, that isn't shiny, that is recyclable, it's almost difficult to hold onto, right?

**Travis:** Yeah, and it's not really durable enough.

**Teresa:** It's not durable enough.

**Travis:** Even if you could unwrap it carefully to be reusable the next year, right? How would you store it carefully? Yeah.

**Teresa:** Exactly. So there's a balancing act here, right? If you buy one of those, like, super durable shiny papers, if you unwrap it carefully, you can reuse it for several years.

**Travis:** I think a good balance of that though is you could do like a butcher paper something and have reusable bows and ribbons.

**Teresa:** Right.

**Travis:** And you talked about like, you know, like fake evergreen, you know, little sprigs and stuff like that, that you could use to still get that thing and then recycle the butcher paper.

**Teresa:** Right. If you are mindful about your consumption, you can also use the same bags every year, right? We have a collection of bags. I love the pre-printed boxes.

**Travis:** Yep.

**Teresa:** You can reuse those, because they are pretty durable, things like that.

**Travis:** That's my favorite. I mean, listen, if you didn't grow up in houses with the boxes that got used every Christmas, my favorite is like, "Save the box—" As you're opening the gift, I'm like, "And save the box, just give me the box. If you could give me— Just give me back the box. No, please don't try to fold it, just let me. I'll fold it. No, don't tear— It's taped. There's three pieces of tape. Just, if you could give me back, mm, just hand me the box, I'll do it. Let me open it. Thank you, here it is, take the shirt."

**Teresa:** So, our family tradition. is that we save the boxes, we save the ribbons, and if it's like, a bag, we save those, we fold those up and save those. Usually for paper, it does find its way to the garbage, although my dad is amazing at unwrapping a gift without disturbing the paper.

**Travis:** You say amazing, but it takes so long.

**Teresa:** It does take— It takes a while. He is very methodical, but. It can be done.

**Travis:** But we still love him.

**Teresa:** And he does often save the paper. Um, I like to gift in fabric. It's a very stretchy fabric. Like you said though, it doesn't have the same kind of, you know, je ne sais quoi that unwrapping, ripping a paper does. But it's great for our family, for you and I. We often exchange gifts that are wrapped in that.

**Travis:** And it's also, it's not, cause we have a lot of little ones...

**Teresa:** Mm-hmm.

**Travis:** ... where it's like, oh, here's a little box or something that's going in the stockings, right? And it's like, it's like four inches by four inches, right? It's like the amount you'd have to cut out of a roll of wrapping paper would be more wasteful. And it just is like, "oh, it's in a little stretchy bag. That is great."

**Teresa:** Right. So if you are doing the wrapping, which I like to do, here's some tips. Do have a clear, specific workspace. I do not prefer the floor. I like a table or a counter. Some people prefer the floor. I would caution against using a bed because you are using scissors and you might hook that quilt.

**Travis:** Mm. Sure.

**Teresa:** You don't wanna cut those up. So, um...

**Travis:** No, unless you've decided to use your bedding for wrapping, then I guess.

**Teresa:** Mm, yeah. But they, if you are... If you have a sewer in your family, there are some like plastic, hard plastic mats you can put down if what you have is a bed or carpet.

**Travis:** You could also always go to the hardware store and get like a two foot by four foot, like half inch plywood or something and create a stable service wherever.

**Teresa:** Sure, absolutely. There are those who recommend that you have two scissors, one pair for paper that you can keep very, very sharp, and the other pair for ribbons, right, that often have like, I mean, they're fabric-y, right?

They might also have, if they have wires in them for styling, or maybe like they're yarn ribbons and they can get kind of fuzzy or things like that, right? But I do suggest that you have those scissors and make sure that they're sharp. That is one of the things that is going to give you a beautiful piece of

wrapping paper to work with.

**Travis:** Mm.

**Teresa:** Um...

**Travis:** It also gives you that nice sound if you can get it started and then just run it forward.

**Teresa:** Oh, just slide it up.

**Travis:** [imitates scissors gliding on wrapping paper] Ugh. Amazing.

**Teresa:** You can always kind of fold the edges if you find that they've gotten a little raggedy. That's okay too. And make sure that you get tape that is clear, that disappears clear.

**Travis:** You don't want that opaque kind of like...

**Teresa:** Yeah.

**Travis:** This... Smoky.

**Teresa:** Unless it's a look you're going for with like washi tape. Right? Those printed tapes are very pretty. You can use that artfully.

**Travis:** Duct tape, electrical tape.

**Teresa:** Hmm.

**Travis:** You can use it all. Packing tape.

**Teresa:** If you're going for a look, I guess. I mean, packing tape does disappear clear, which is good.

**Travis:** Yeah, it might be overkill. Yeah.

**Teresa:** It's difficult to use. Difficult to use. Um, if you use boxes for, like,



differently shaped gifts, you can always I would say try and use the smallest box you can, but if it's a little bit big, you can kind of pad it with tissue paper, or if it's for kids, they love to shake those boxes and hear it rattle around.

If you're good, you really only need three pieces of tape. Ah, here we go. No, I don't know, what's that mean? So when you are wrapping a box, the first piece of tape is to connect the first... roll over to the second one, right?

**Travis:** Uh-huh.

**Teresa:** You stack it up. And then the second piece of tape is for the second side after you've folded in the corners and folded up the top, you put that second piece of tape right in the middle and your folds, if they're nice and crisp and you've left enough paper will stick inside, right? And then the third piece is for the other end.

**Travis:** Okay. Sure. Or you can just put a bunch of tape on there.

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** Let go and let God, you know what I mean?

**Teresa:** There are lots of ways to decorate. I do recommend that if you are using a ribbon, you cross the ribbon over on the top and cover that fabric bulge with your bow instead of doing it on the bottom because then it won't sit flat. I wouldn't stack gifts up and down like that, but you can make a kind of brick pattern, right, with gifts. Sorry, the way that you're looking at me...

**Travis:** No, you're just very cute.

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** I just kind of shove them under the tree.

**Teresa:** Yeah.

**Travis:** Yeah, listen, there are things I care about, there's things I don't,

there are things you care about, things you don't, and they don't always overlap, and that's marriage and that's fine.

**Teresa:** But here's the thing about the wrapping, right?

**Travis:** Yes, please.

**Teresa:** You can use fabric, you can use bags, you can use reprinted or pre-printed boxes, things like that.

**Travis:** You can use newspaper if you want to.

**Teresa:** Sure.

**Travis:** I used to love getting gifts that were wrapped in Funnies, in the Sunday Funnies.

**Teresa:** Oh yeah. But if the wrapping is reusable, the general rule is that the person who receives the gifts keeps the wrapping.

**Travis:** Yes. If you want paper reusable, don't give it to kids.

**Teresa:** Yeah.

**Travis:** Don't give it to kids, kids are gonna tear it. Because they're kids, they're children.

**Teresa:** I do a little roundup after everyone has opened their gifts and take back my reusable. like bags, right? The fabricy stretchy ones, after everyone has kind of abandoned their piles, right?

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Teresa:** And that's with my family. I would not recommend, if you give someone a gift wrapped in one of those, that you stick around and wait for them to unwrap it and then take the wrap. Please don't do that.

**Travis:** Or like bug them about it later. It's not like a casserole dish or you

brought a thing out. You give them like, you know, a bag and then like to text them like, "Hey, just whenever you can bring that back. That would be great."

**Teresa:** You could, though, use a gift as part of the wrapping, right? If you are giving someone, you could add to their gift, like if you give them something that you could easily wrap in a tea towel, right? A beautiful Christmas tea towel would be a great way to do it. Or like a scarf, you can easily wrap things like a bottle of wine or whatever in a scarf, and that's part of the gift.

**Travis:** Sure.

**Teresa:** Or I mean, I've even seen some things online where like, People use like a hat and like mittens, right? They like put the hat on the bottom of the bottle and the mitten on the top, and then you use the other mitten to kind of, like, stuff it inside so that the mitten stands up. Very cute, very cute.

**Travis:** I love all of that. You're adorable.

**Teresa:** Aw, thanks.

**Travis:** I love that.

**Teresa:** Happy wrapping everyone. Don't stay up too late.

**Travis:** And listen, speaking of wrapping, let's wrap it up and say thank you to our editor, Rachel, without whom we would not be able to make this show. Thank you to our researcher, Alex, without whom we could not make this show, and thank you to you for listening.

What would we do without you? Sit here in silence, yell into the void, who knows? Thank you for not making us face that dark, dark reality. We wanna make sure you go check out [McElroyMerch.com](http://McElroyMerch.com). We got a lot of great stuff over there here in December. Well, it'll be December by the time you listen to this.

We also want to encourage you to go to [bit.ly/Candlenights2023](https://bit.ly/Candlenights2023), that's Candlenights2023, and consider getting yourself a \$5 ticket to watch our Candlenights special this year, benefiting Harmony House in Huntington, West Virginia. 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. We also thank 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.

Also, we are always taking your topic submissions, your questions, your idioms. Please continue to send those to [ShmannersCast@gmail.com](mailto:ShmannersCast@gmail.com) and say hi to Alex because 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]

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