

## Shmanners 19: Weddings: Engagement

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**Travis:**

Teresa, I'd like to ask for your podcast's hand in marriage.

**Teresa:**

That's a little outdated, don't you think?

**Travis:**

It's Shmanners.

[theme music plays]

**Travis:**

Hello, internet. I am your husband host, Travis McElroy.

**Teresa:**

And I am your wife host, Teresa McElroy.

**Travis:**

And you're listening to Shmanners.

**Teresa:**

It's extraordinary etiquette...

**Travis:**

For ordinary occasions. Hello, my love.

**Teresa:**

Hello.

**Travis:**

Good morning.

**Teresa:**

Yes, good morning.

**Travis:**

How are you? Doing well?

**Teresa:**

Yeah, sure.

**Travis:**

Yeah?

**Teresa:**

Yeah.

**Travis:**

Hey, everyone. This is a little window. That's what marriage is like.

**Teresa:**

[laughs]

**Travis:**

That's marriage every day. You see the person. You say, like, "Hey, how you doing?" They say, "I'm great." You say, "Cool." And then you're off on another marital adventure.

**Teresa:**

It's something like that.

**Travis:**

[laughs] Why do I bring up marriage, Teresa? What are we talking about today?

**Teresa:**

Because we are doing another installment of our marriage series, backtracked just a little bit, to engagements.

**Travis:**

That's correct. And there's gonna be a whole lotta chunks. I saw people discussing this on the Facebook group and on, on the Twitter, um, discussing, like, "Ooh, is this included? And can I bring this up?"

And there's just so much etiquette and manners and history involved in, uh, the marriage/wedding process, that we just have to break it up.

So, today, we're talking about engagement.

**Teresa:**

Mm-hmm.

**Travis:**

I feel like this one's gonna be pretty rife with discussion, least as far as, like, the history goes and some of the manners. So, let's jump right into it. Tell me a little about the history of the engagement.

**Teresa:**

Well, I don't wanna bum you out—

**Travis:**

Oh no.

**Teresa:**

... but—

**Travis:**

Too late.

**Teresa:**

... the history of engagement pretty much goes like this. Women are property.

**Travis:**

Yeah.

**Teresa:**

Women were given rings as a beginning of a contract. Um, that was the engagement ring, and it was to basically show everyone that she was taken.

**Travis:**

Just a tiny finger shackle. Am I right, ladies?

**Teresa:**

Yeah. And then, later on in history, it became a little more of an insurance policy.

**Travis:**

How so?

**Teresa:**

Well, I'll get to it.

**Travis:**

Okay.

**Teresa:**

I'll get to it.

**Travis:**

Oh, this is just the brief overview?

**Teresa:**

This is just a brief overview because I wanted to prepare for the being bummed-ness.

**Travis:**

Okay. Gotcha. Gotcha. Gotcha.

**Teresa:**

So, there is evidence, as far back as pre-history, like, cavemen times, that the cavemen tied cords, made of braided grass, around their mates' wrists, ankles, and waists, to bring her [laughs] under his spiritual control.

**Travis:**

That's a little overdoing it, don't you think? He couldn't just do wrist?

**Teresa:**

Well, she's a little more, you know?

**Travis:**

Why not just wrap her up in a mammoth skin and bury her? Come on!

**Teresa:**

She's not as easy as a cow to catch, I guess.

**Travis:**

You got... If cartoons have taught me anything, you gotta bonk her on her head with a club, and then you drag her back to her cave. Hey, why was that an image—

**Teresa:**

[laughs]

**Travis:**

... that was—okay, the show? This has just occurred to me. That's a very upsetting image to show to children in cartoons.

**Teresa:**

Yeah. Not okay. So, there's that.

**Travis:**

Yes.

**Teresa:**

And moving up to the ancient Egyptians, there were, uh, Egyptians uncovered, you know, the mummies?

**Travis:**

Mm-hmm.

**Teresa:**

Uh, wearing rings, made of silver or gold wire, on, uh, the third finger of their left hand, which is our traditional wedding ring finger. Um—

**Travis:**

At least, here, in America, and several other countries.

**Teresa:**

Yes. Uh, and that comes from the belief that there is a vein that is directly from that finger to the heart.

**Travis:**

Mm-hmm.

**Teresa:**

Whether... I'm not a doctor. I don't know about anatomy. I don't know if that's true, but that's, like, the common—

**Travis:**

Well—

**Teresa:**

... thinking of it.

**Travis:**

... even if that is true, the heart, um, and correct me if I'm wrong, Sydnee McElroy, is not where our emotions come from in real life.

**Teresa:**

[laughs] That's true.

**Travis:**

Okay. I'm ... Don't hold me to that. I'm [laughs] not a doctor.

**Teresa:**

[laughs]

**Travis:**

But I'm pretty sure.

**Teresa:**

And speaking of Sydnee McElroy, way back in the second century, uh, BCE, according to Pliny the Elder...

**Travis:**

Oh, we've heard of him on Sawbones.

**Teresa:**

Yeah. The groom gives the bride, first, a gold ring, to wear during the ceremony and at special events, and then an iron ring to wear at home—

**Travis:**

Oh—

**Teresa:**

... signifying her binding legal agreement to his ownership of her.

**Travis:**

But what about his agreement to her?

**Teresa:**

That really didn't come in for much longer.

**Travis:**

That's bonkers. I don't like that.

**Teresa:**

Yeah, I told you. Get ready to be bummed.

**Travis:**

There had to have been, like, women and, like, advocates at the time, being like, "Hey, this is messed up." Right? [laughs]

**Teresa:**

[laughs]

**Travis:**

Like, every, like, "What about you to you, and you to me, and us to each other, and this being an equal partnership?"

**Teresa:**

That didn't really exist for a very, very long time. It's a very modern notion that that would be an equal partnership.

**Travis:**

But, okay, keep moving forward in time, so I don't get too bummed out.

**Teresa:**

Keep moving forward. Actually, there was a dude who thought that this whole thing might not be a very, uh, on the up-and-up. Uh, the Bishop of Salisbury, in 1217, he wanted to put an end to the popular practice of seducing girls into mock marriage, people who were using this as kind of like a, um, a way to get at your goods, if you—

**Travis:**

What is—

**Teresa:**

... I can say.

**Travis:**

... mock marriage?

**Teresa:**

In mock marriage, they would give them a ring made out of, uh, rushes. Um, and they basically did it to kinda trick the ladies into, like I said, givin' up the goods, whether it was material goods or other goods.

**Travis:**

Was it basically saying, like, "Soon, we shall be, like, married in a church, in front of the family but, for now, let's consider ourselves married with this woven reed ring"?

**Teresa:**

Yes. And, his solution to this, he declared a marriage with a rush ring legally binding.

**Travis:**

Okay. Wait—

**Teresa:**

So—

**Travis:**

... so, all you had to do is get, to get ... Okay. Wait. Hold on. Hold on.

**Teresa:**

Okay.

**Travis:**

In the ... In 1200, all you had to do is get married was put a ring on someone's finger?

**Teresa:**

At that point, yes, because it was so rampant, that people were promising rings and breaking engagements, once they got whatever it was that they wanted.

**Travis:**

As people who have gotten married and had to go through a whole planning process and put together a whole ceremony and reception, the idea of just being able to pop a ring on you and be like, "We're married now," [laughs] is, like, oh [laughs] really enticing.

**Teresa:**

Well, you have to remember, that this was a business transaction, basically.



**Travis:**

Yeah.

**Teresa:**

You know? And it, it stayed a business transaction for a very, very long time.

**Travis:**

'Cause that's, like, where, like, dowry and stuff comes from, right? I think we talked a little bit about—

**Teresa:**

Yeah, a little bit about that.

**Travis:**

... like, a hope chest and that kind of thing the last time. But that idea of basically, you were paying someone to take your daughter. Right?

**Teresa:**

Right.

**Travis:**

I see.

**Teresa:**

Um, so, I'm gonna come back to diamond engagement rings, because that's really, like, its own can of worms.

**Travis:**

Mm-hmm.

**Teresa:**

But, moving forward in time, as far as, I mentioned rings becoming a bit of an insurance policy.

**Travis:**

Yes.

**Teresa:**

Right? Um, so, I think that it is safe to say that engagement rings were really for the rich, for the affluent classes.

**Travis:**

Mm-hmm.

**Teresa:**

Um, you probably couldn't afford a ring, and if you couldn't afford a ring, you could still get married.

**Travis:**

Yeah.

**Teresa:**

Um, so, what it was, was you would engage in this business transaction, and receiving a ring from a male, which was, you know, it was a very cisgender kind of society.

**Travis:**

Yeah. There was just the, the one and one—

**Teresa:**

Just—

**Travis:**

... at that point. There was no mixing and matching of anything.

**Teresa:**

That's right.

**Travis:**

It was just dude and woman.

**Teresa:**

Yep. So, the male would give the female a ring, and that ring was more of a... I don't wanna say promise, but I do wanna say that it was kind of like a, a lend-and-lease agreement, where he was able to kind of try out her goods, do you know what I mean?

**Travis:**

Really?

**Teresa:**

Yeah. And if he broke off the engagement, she was allowed to keep that ring, in order to support herself, for the nine months to a year where she was cast out from society.

**Travis:**

Wow.

**Teresa:**

Well, being virginal was very important.

**Travis:**

But did that reset after 12 months, old timey people?

**Teresa:**

Basically, as far as society—

**Travis:**

[laughs]

**Teresa:**

... as far as society [laughs] knew.

**Travis:**

I wanna say, actually, I was, at first, a little bit, um, shocked by that. But then I sit there and go, "You know, that's actually, I think, in many ways, more progressive," I thought, for better than we have now, regarding people who judge young ladies, and young men too, I guess, on, like, virginity, as, like, a metric for how special they are.

**Teresa:**

Mm-hmm.

**Travis:**

And the idea of being, like, "But after 12 months, you're back to factory settings, and—

**Teresa:**

[laughs]

**Travis:**

... everything's okay again, and we're not gonna judge you anymore after that."

**Teresa:**

Well, you're probably judged a little bit, but you are back on the marriage market.

**Travis:**

Mm-hmm.

**Teresa:**

Um, because, if you weren't married by 25, you were a spinster.

**Travis:**

Yeah.

**Teresa:**

Yeah.

**Travis:**

Well, also, probably, if you weren't married by 30, you were probably dead, so [laughs]—

**Teresa:**

[laughs]

**Travis:**

... but that makes a lot of sense to me.

**Teresa:**

So, this ring was used as kind of collateral, almost, for the relationship to come.

**Travis:**

Yeah.

**Teresa:**

Um, and then, if it was broken, the ring would be used, in order to be of support for the woman.

**Travis:**

Got it.

**Teresa:**

Um, and when I say lend-lease agreement, I mean her womb. Right?

**Travis:**

No. No.

**Teresa:**

Yeah. Okay.

**Travis:**

We got it. Yeah.

**Teresa:**

Okay.

**Travis:**

We got it. We got it. Yeah.

**Teresa:**

All right. We got that?

**Travis:**

Her bits. We got it. Yeah. Yeah.

**Teresa:**

Her bits. So, then, I'd like to backtrack a little bit to the diamond engagement ring.

**Travis:**

Yeah, let's talk about this, 'cause I remember, um, very early on in our relationship, we listened to an episode of Stuff You Should Know, where—

**Teresa:**

Mm-hmm.

**Travis:**

... they talked about how diamonds work. And it was very eye-opening, that was then, uh, very influential, I would say, on our engagement ring process.

**Teresa:**

Right.

**Travis:**

Um, so, so tell the people a little bit about the diamond ring, as how it became the go-to engagement ring.

**Teresa:**

Well, first of all, I wanna say, throughout history, the first recorded use of a diamond engagement ring was by the Archduke Maximilian of Austria, when he proposed to Mary of Burgundy.

**Travis:**

Of course.

**Teresa:**

Okay? And that was—

**Travis:**

A love story for the ages. Everybody knows that one.

**Teresa:**

That was in 1477.

**Travis:**

Mm-hmm.

**Teresa:**

That's the first recorded use. And, of course, um, precious stones, precious metals, have been used, uh, throughout history, in order to signify that sort of bond.

**Travis:**

Uh, and I'm going to, uh, play a little bit of, I don't know what the stupid version of devil's advocate is, but I, a devil's imbecile, but I'll do that right now. And diamonds are, of course, the most precious. Right?

**Teresa:**

No.

**Travis:**

Aww.

**Teresa:**

No. No, they really aren't. Um, in fact, the, um, the diamond engagement ring was kind of on the decline, at the turn of the—of the 1900s. Um, and it really didn't get back into vogue until the 1930s.

**Travis:**

Well, what happened in the 1930s, Teresa?

**Teresa:**

Well, Travis, in the 1930s, the De Beers Corporation, um, pretty much ran a highly successful marketing campaign about how real men buy diamonds, and diamonds is what signifies love, and a diamond—

**Travis:**

Diamonds are forever.

**Teresa:**

... is forever.

**Travis:**

Yes.

**Teresa:**

That is right. Do you, do you have any inclination as to why they might say it is forever?

**Travis:**

Um, I imagine that, what... Well, hold on. If I remember correctly, I know that there was a big piece of them trying to push that, like, not recycling rings, and not—

**Teresa:**

Right.

**Travis:**

... like, that you would keep it forever, so that way, when you needed an engagement ring, you had to buy new, rather than, than either inheriting or going to, like, a pawn shop or going to, like, a resale shop.

**Teresa:**

Yes, because diamonds are a little bit like cars.

**Travis:**

Mm-hmm.

**Teresa:**

Soon as you take it off the lot, it starts to depreciate.

**Travis:**

Mm-hmm. Also, they come with cup holders.

**Teresa:**

[laughs] Uh, they, they, they really don't—

**Travis:**

Because they're only worth as much as someone will pay for them. Right?

**Teresa:**

Exactly.

**Travis:**

Like, there's—

**Teresa:**

Yes.

**Travis:**

... not really a practical use for a diamond engagement ring. So, if someone says to you, "This is how much this diamond is worth," and then you buy it. And then, they say, "Okay, well it's not worth that much anymore." And you... There's no... You can't turn around and be like, "It... Yes, it is. You're wrong."

**Teresa:**

[laughs]

**Travis:**

Like, it's only worth as much. And, so, the De Beers Corporation, the, uh, they set the price for the diamonds they're selling—

**Teresa:**

Mm-hmm.

**Travis:**

... and they make them scarce by only selling X amount a year.



**Teresa:**

Right. They have, they have basically a monopoly on the, the diamond industry.

**Travis:**

Mm-hmm.

**Teresa:**

And, so, they withhold diamonds in order to keep them scarce. And then—

**Travis:**

Yes.

**Teresa:**

... they, uh, they advertise that diamonds are really what everybody should have, so then, they keep demand up.

**Travis:**

Yeah.

**Teresa:**

And it's really kind of perfect. [laughs]

**Travis:**

Well, yeah. It's a perfect system because it's a complete scam. I mean, just the idea of—

**Teresa:**

Right.

**Travis:**

... like they... And listen. I say scam, in the way of, like, we live in a capitalist society, like, they're really killing it.

**Teresa:**

Mm-hmm.

**Travis:**

They, I say scam, with very little... Well, I judge it, but not like condemnation because it... The cycle is, they say, an engagement ring should be a diamond if you love her. [laughs] And they're like—

**Teresa:**

[laughs]

**Travis:**

"Oh, okay. Yeah. I do love her. Deal." And then, they say, "Well, once you buy it, just so you know, you've used up all the love, and [laughs]—"

**Teresa:**

[laughs]

**Travis:**

... and it's not worth anything anymore." And you're like, "That makes complete sense. Yeah. Definitely."

**Teresa:**

Now, there are rings that do appreciate in value after a long time, if they have cultural significance.

**Travis:**

Mm-hmm.

**Teresa:**

Uh, like Princess Diana's ring.

**Travis:**

Yeah, well, of course.

**Teresa:**

Yes. That, that has appreciated in value, from when it was purchased. Um, and then there are several antique rings, maybe with history or, um—

**Travis:**

Family value.

**Teresa:**

... family value. Right. Those tend to appreciate slightly. Um—

**Travis:**

Let me ask you a question. The De Beers 1930s "Diamond are Forever" is this where we started seeing people keep, like, continuing to wear both a wedding and engagement ring after the wedding? Before then, would you

give the engagement ring, and then give the wedding ring, and just sell the engagement ring, get rid of it? Or were people always holding on them? Do you know?

**Teresa:**

I believe people were always holding onto them, whether or not they were wearing them at the same time, I'm not sure. But, like I said, for a very long time, it was an insurance policy.

**Travis:**

Mm-hmm.

**Teresa:**

So, you wanted to hold on to the wealth that was in that ring.

**Travis:**

Gotcha.

**Teresa:**

However little there was in it.

**Travis:**

Yeah.

**Teresa:**

Um, so, I do wanna say, that if you want a diamond engagement ring, please buy a—

**Travis:**

Go for it.

**Teresa:**

... diamond engagement ring. Make sure that it is responsibly mined, um, and that it is something that you will treasure for a long time, because you probably won't get your money back [laughs] if you—

**Travis:**

Yeah.

**Teresa:**

... [laughs] don't like it anymore. Now, my ring, that you and I designed together, is not a diamond. It is a white sapphire, which is another precious

stone, um, but, uh, that was the best decision for us. And there are lots of different rings out there. In fact, the colored stones are coming back in vogue at this—

**Travis:**

Mm-hmm.

**Teresa:**

... point.

**Travis:**

And my ring is a big hunk of amber with a mosquito in it.

**Teresa:**

[laughs]

**Travis:**

I'm pretty proud of it.

**Teresa:**

Right. [laughs]

**Travis:**

So, I can clone dinosaurs. Um—

**Teresa:**

Yeah.

**Travis:**

... so, do we have anything else on history, or shall we move on to some questions, and—

**Teresa:**

Let's go ahead and move on to some questions.

**Travis:**

Okay, great. Let's ask a couple questions, and then we will go to break and come on back and talk about it a little bit more. This is from Katrina. "Are engagement announcements required?"

**Teresa:**

You know, in this day and age, engagement announcements are not required. You can really do as much of the wedding hoopla as you want.

**Travis:**

Mm-hmm.

**Teresa:**

Um, traditionally, an engagement announcement goes out in a newspaper, but now that newspapers are no longer the thing everybody reads every day, they can go out on social media. You can put it on a blog site, and, you know, if you just wanna send out nice cards to your friends and family, to say, "Hey, we got engaged," that's enough.

**Travis:**

Let me ask, if, we didn't get this specific question, but I feel like this is kind of a very encompassing question, and that is, in this day and age, let's have us a brief discourse about the advantages, disadvantages, the pros and cons, of having the discussion with your partner, about what the engagement should be, whether that's the actual proposal or when or anything, versus—

**Teresa:**

Mm-hmm.

**Travis:**

... a complete surprise—

**Teresa:**

Mm-hmm.

**Travis:**

... out of nowhere?

**Teresa:**

Um, I advocate against having it being a complete surprise, um, because if you don't know the other ... what the other person is going to say, 100%, you probably shouldn't ask them.

**Travis:**

I would say that, I think that a mixture's always a good way to go, where, like, you'd discuss it beforehand, and it there's, like, "Hey, do you think that we are ready to get engaged?"

"I do."

"Okay. It will happen at some point." And then—

**Teresa:**

Well, I... Definitely.

**Travis:**

Yeah.

**Teresa:**

I think that if surprises are your thing... They're not my thing.

**Travis:**

Yeah, we didn't do a surprise at all. Like, you knew the day the ring would be there, and then we did it, and we were engaged.

**Teresa:**

Because surprises make me anxious. I don't—

**Travis:**

Yeah, me too.

**Teresa:**

... like surprise parties.

**Travis:**

No.

**Teresa:**

I want to know the plan.

**Travis:**

I like ... We both like plans.

**Teresa:**

[laughs] But, um, if it is something, where you want to make it very special and unexpected, the event unexpected, then, that's lovely, if that's what you like. But I don't think that the, um, that the... and we talked about contracts, that the contract should be exposed, unexpectedly.

**Travis:**

I think so too. Um, Ira asked the question, "Are there objectively wrong places to pop the question?"

**Teresa:**

Um, I think, again, that really just depends on your relationship with the person and knowing what they like. I would never want to be proposed to in a public space.

**Travis:**

Mm-hmm.

**Teresa:**

It feels highly pressurized to me, you know, one of those, like, sky-writings or jumbotron, or things like that in a public space, would make me very anxious.

**Travis:**

I also think there's probably inappropriate places, like, this is gonna sound like I'm making a joke, but the first thing that popped in my mind is like a funeral. You know what I mean? Like—

**Teresa:**

Right.

**Travis:**

... there's probably a time... And, I would also say, someone else's. We got that question a lot too. Someone else's engagement party—

**Teresa:**

Hmm.

**Travis:**

... or a wedding or a birthday, anything where the ... It's supposed to be about the other person's, uh, celebration—

**Teresa:**

Yeah.

**Travis:**

... and you're—

**Teresa:**

You're really stealing their thunder at that point.

**Travis:**

I would say, especially, and I think there's a certain justification you could make of, like, "Well, everyone's all together. I wanted to m— ... Like, this was a great opportunity where we're—

**Teresa:**

Well, then throw—

**Travis:**

... all together."

**Teresa:**

... your own party. [laughs]

**Travis:**

Yeah.

**Teresa:**

[laughs]

**Travis:**

I would agree. Unless the other person, whose party it is, is totally in it and is, like, "Yeah. I'm totally on board with this," I don't know that it would be appropriate.

Um, let's go to break real quick. Um, hear from another Maximum podcast, and then we'll come back and talk about engagements a little bit more.

--

**Erin:**

Hey, I'm Erin Gibson.

**Bryan:**

I'm Bryan Safi.

**Erin:**

And we host Throwing Shade, where we could like at all the issues that are important to ladies and gays, and anybody else who cares about that stuff. And we, uh, and we make... we make funnies.



**Bryan:**

Yeah. Either you—

**Erin:**

Oh—

**Bryan:**

... care or you don't.

**Erin:**

... that's awful.

--

**Travis:**

So, this was a big one. This was kind of our elbows-on-the-table question. Um, from Lacey, "Should the groom..." I'm gonna say in this, in this circumstance, let's just say, "Should one party ask permission from the bride's father?"

**Teresa:**

That is a very cultural thing. Um, and I know, in the southern United States, that still does happen a lot. Um, in older, richer families, maybe that happens a lot. Um, but, as far as the permission-giving, you don't... It's not like you need the father's signature, because it's no longer property-passing from—

**Travis:**

Yeah.

**Teresa:**

... the father to the groom, I suppose, um, because that's the way it was. It was a property exchange, and it isn't that anymore.

**Travis:**

But I would say, my advice would be, if the bride's father is the type of guy that you feel like would expect you to give some kind of heads-up before, maybe he's more traditional, a little bit more old-fashioned family. Okay, great. I think there's a way to do it without making it the old, fuddy-duddy, like, "I'd like to for..." I think that there's a way for you and the potential

bride to, like, approach the father and say, like, "We want you to know that we are planning to get engaged." You know? A heads-up—

**Teresa:**

I think that's a good compromise.

**Travis:**

... you know what I mean? Give him a heads-up, without it being that, like, transactional feeling that you get, that's very skeezy.

**Teresa:**

Right. I mean, because it is no longer an exchange of property—

**Travis:**

Mm-hmm.

**Teresa:**

... I don't think that it's necessary, but if—

**Travis:**

No, definitely not.

**Teresa:**

... if it's something that maybe the parents expect, it's a good foot to start out on.

**Travis:**

I think that that's kind of a good rule of thumb in general, across, I would say, all wedding planning, is that, traditional doesn't necessarily mean you have to do it, but you should anticipate, especially if it's a very common tradition or a very expected tradition, that there will be people who go, "Oh, oh, really?"

**Teresa:**

Mm-hmm.

**Travis:**

... "Oh." Like, that's okay. I mean, there will always be those people throughout all of time, but, like, I think there's a certain amount of you gotta brace yourself for somebody going, "Huh."

For example, this question from Laura, "Is it okay for a woman to propose to a man?" Yeah, I think definitely.

**Teresa:**

Absolutely. Uh, like I said, there's no more exchange of property. It's more of a mutual partnership. And, so, if that's the way you feel, and that's what you wanna do, you should do it.

**Travis:**

But you should, I think, brace yourself a little bit, especially, I, you know, as more and more people, I think, get progressive and relax a little bit. But I think, in the time, like, there's gonna be a subset of people that go, "Really? Huh. We are ... Really?"

**Teresa:**

Yeah.

**Travis:**

It like, it's okay. Of course, it's okay, but, like, there will be people. This is from Beverley, and I think, speaking of wedding rings or engagement rings, "Do you have to buy an engagement ring? Isn't the wedding ring enough?"

**Teresa:**

No. You don't have to buy an engagement ring. And, and I'm, I feel a little bit like a broken record, but, really, the engagement ring was insurance. It was to show that she... that the woman was property already. Um, and, so, if that's not your bag, then, no. You don't have to buy an engagement ring. There are ring exchanges in different ceremonies, and some ceremonies around the world don't even have ring exchanges. Um, so, if it's important to you to get one, then get one. If it isn't, then don't.

**Travis:**

Um—

**Teresa:**

Use that money as a down payment on a house. [laughs]

**Travis:**

Yeah. Um, I like this question. "If you attend..." This is from Kurt. "If you attend a wedding shower and give a gift, are you required to give another gift at the wedding?"

**Teresa:**

Um, traditionally, I would say that the gifts given at an engagement party or a wedding shower, um, are significantly, uh, less expensive, so they're usually things that are like, um, a picture frame or a bottle of wine or smaller sort of gifts. And the gift that you give for the wedding is usually something off their registry, something a little more pricey for their home.

**Travis:**

Are engagement parties still all that common? Like, we didn't have one. I don't... I'm trying—

**Teresa:**

Well—

**Travis:**

... to remember if I've ever attended somebody's engagement party or wedding shower that wasn't like specifically like, oh, the maid of honor threw it for the bride-to-be, or something. Like it was... I can't remember going to, like, a big, you know, party thrown for the couple.

**Teresa:**

Well, traditionally, engagement parties aren't very large. They usually include just the families and the wedding party.

**Travis:**

Oh.

**Teresa:**

Maybe some neighbors or close friends. But, um, I don't know if there's a question about this. You really shouldn't invite anyone to the engagement party that you are not inviting to your wedding. It's, it's taboo, and it, it makes people's feelings get hurt.

**Travis:**

Well, there's a question from Danielle. Danielle asks, "How do you politely respond when someone congratulates you and follows it up with, 'I'm invited, right?' But they aren't? Smile and thank them? Be honest?"

**Teresa:**

You should smile and thank them for the congratulations and let them know that the, uh, guest list is still undecided.

**Travis:**

Yep. Well, the, you know, "The venue's not very big. We haven't nailed it all down yet."

**Teresa:**

You don't have to give any of those excuses. "Well—

**Travis:**

Uh, you know that's always—

**Teresa:**

... we're still working on the guest list."

**Travis:**

... my problem. You're always right.

**Teresa:**

We're still working on it.

**Travis:**

I always have a tendency to come up with too many justifications, that really makes it sound like I'm lying. When it's like, "Well, it's this, and this, and this, and also this, and also this."

**Teresa:**

[laughs]

**Travis:**

So, like, you don't have to say that. Just say, "No." [laughs]

**Teresa:**

Just say, "We're still working on the guest list."

**Travis:**

Um, this is from Nicole. "How long is too long of an engagement period?"

**Teresa:**

Um, I don't think that there is such a thing as too long for any particular couple, especially since, these days, a lot of wedding venues and vendors get booked up a year to, to, um, 18 months ahead of time.

**Travis:**

Wow. And I—

**Teresa:**

They really do. They get booked up, and so there, there isn't a lot that you can really do about having an engagement at least a year-and-a-half.

**Travis:**

But I think, once again, this is one of those differences between is there anything wrong, versus, like, societal expectation.

**Teresa:**

Mm-hmm.

**Travis:**

If you, I think if you're engaged for longer than two years without a set date or without a plan, you're gonna start getting questions from people, especially family members.

**Teresa:**

Well, there is a difference between, "We're trying to find a venue. We're working on it," and "We're just happy where we are right now."

**Travis:**

Yeah.

**Teresa:**

Um—

**Travis:**

Because engagement is inherently a transitional period in the relationship, where you move—

**Teresa:**

Right.

**Travis:**

... from, like, dating to marriage. And engagement's a stepping stone. So, I think there's a justifiable expectation, when you tell friends and family, like, "We're engaged," that that's not a holding pattern, you know, forever.

**Teresa:**

Right.

**Travis:**

You know what I mean?

**Teresa:**

Um, I do agree, but I think that it's different for everyone. I would cap it 10 years.

**Travis:**

That would be okay. 'Cause, I—

**Teresa:**

10 years is too—

**Travis:**

... you're saying—

**Teresa:**

... long.

**Travis:**

... like, if you become common-law married, in that—

**Teresa:**

Yes.

**Travis:**

... time, then, you [laugh] probably—

**Teresa:**

[laughs]

**Travis:**

... missed your window?

**Teresa:**

Yep. You missed your window if you're common-law married by that point. I think that's a safe bet. [laughs]

**Travis:**

Um, this is from Betsy. And, I... "Are there etiquette rules about public proposals?"

**Teresa:**

Oh, goodness. Um, as far... I think that they do need to be orchestrated well—

**Travis:**

Mm-hmm.

**Teresa:**

... that chaos is never appreciated in—

**Travis:**

Yes.

**Teresa:**

... any public place. Um, and you really should plan it out with authorities.

**Travis:**

Oh, definitely.

**Teresa:**

So, a surprise [laughs] in a public place maybe is not the best idea, um, because you have... you run into security issues or, uh, traffic issues or things like that. So, if you're gonna do in a very public place, like, um, I don't know, a ballpark or, um, what else?

**Travis:**

Concert?

**Teresa:**

A concert, that kinda stuff. It needs to be cleared with authorities first.

**Travis:**

And I also think, much like the... we talked about, you know, not doing it at other peoples' events.

**Teresa:**

Mm-hmm.



**Travis:**

I think that that holds true ... Like, okay. Here's the great example. We saw The Moody Blues in concert, during Nights in White Satin.

**Teresa:**

Yeah. It was awesome.

**Travis:**

Guy in front row. Everybody was standing up. Guy in front row kneeled down. Like, it ended up, like they put, you know, directed a spotlight to him. The drummer, like, handed his drumsticks to the dude after the song. It was a really nice moment. But the guy wasn't trying to hijack everyone in the venue's experience.

**Teresa:**

Right. He didn't run up on stage and—

**Travis:**

Exactly.

**Teresa:**

... steal a microphone. He just bent down in the front row.

**Travis:**

Exactly. It was in that moment, about them, in that moment, and he wasn't trying to make everything about him.

**Teresa:**

Yeah, that's a good example of how to do a public engagement without hijacking the situation.

**Travis:**

Yeah. Um, and, and, you know, I also would say, in general, I would say, it's also about your partner. It's about the other. You know, what do they want?

**Teresa:**

Mm-hmm.

**Travis:**

Not what do you want.

**Teresa:**

Exactly.

**Travis:**

But I think, don't feel pressure to make it this amazing, magical, special thing, through what you do with it, because the engagement itself, that you're committing to this person, that's the magical thing. You know what I mean?

**Teresa:**

Right.

**Travis:**

And, so, I think that it could very quickly become unwieldy if you're trying to be, like, "And there will be sky-writing and candles, and I'm training doves to do a thing," and, it's like, "Okay, man, save that for the wedding. Like, you can do, you know, may—the wedding, you'll have two years and, like, much better resources and people to help you."

For your engagement, make it special because it's earnest. Make it special because it's sweet. Make it special because it's romantic, not because it's spectacle. You know what I mean? That's my advice.

**Teresa:**

That's very sweet, darling.

**Travis:**

Thank you. I love you very much.

**Teresa:**

I love you too.

**Travis:**

Um, let's see here. Oh, basically, uh, our engagement was I just, like, threw the ring at Teresa, and I was like, "Now, go away." [laughs]

**Teresa:**

It was a high-pressure situation. We both had to go to different theaters.

**Travis:**

That's true. [laughs]

**Teresa:**

[laughs]

**Travis:**

We were both in shows that night. We got home, had about 20 minutes. And then, we're... I did the knee. I said, "I love you."

**Teresa:**

He brought flowers. That was nice.

**Travis:**

I got engaged, and then we both had to go.

**Teresa:**

[laughs]

**Travis:**

I think you were in George M! And I was in Complete Works of Shakespeare Abridged.

**Teresa:**

Yep. Yep.

**Travis:**

Um, Catherine—

**Teresa:**

But I am very glad that you did it that day because I did have the tracking number on the ring—

**Travis:**

Oh yeah.

**Teresa:**

... so I knew it was there.

**Travis:**

Oh, yeah. You would'a killed me.

**Teresa:**

[laughs]

**Travis:**

Um, Catherine asked, "How much should a couple have talked about engagement before a proposal?" It's too late [laughs] for me, but I wanted to spare anyone else from the total, utter surprise proposal, which we talked about a little bit.

**Teresa:**

Yeah, we talked about that, and I believe you should talk about it, um, in the affirmative or in the negative, not in, in kind of, you know, the ephemeralness of, "Do you ever wanna get married?" That's not enough. I think that you need to discuss the idea of getting married to each other—

**Travis:**

Well, and, Heather—

**Teresa:**

... before that happens.

**Travis:**

... this is a good, a tie-in, that Heather said, politely, for the woman to hint at ring preferences before the engagement. I don't think there's anything wrong with either party in, in the, the group, in the, uh, relationship, to say, "Hey, just so you know, should we engaged, this is how I would like it to go." You know what I mean?

**Teresa:**

I am a firm believer of communication, and I think the more that you communicate to each other, the better off you're gonna be. You know?

**Travis:**

And I know that there's always stuff in, like, pop culture and media and stuff, where it's like, "You don't wanna have that conversation too early." Hmm... but gauge it. You have a certain amount of, I think everybody has some self-awareness, when is the appropriate time to have that conversation?

But we, three months into our relationship, when we talked about moving in together, we're like, "We're gonna get married, right?"

"Yeah."

"Okay. Cool. Cool. Cool. Cool."

**Teresa:**

[laughs]

**Travis:**

So, like, I think that it—

**Teresa:**

Travis, you're sharing so much.

**Travis:**

Hey. This is a very romantic episode here. Um, but I just think there's something to be said about, say what you want. Say what you need.

**Teresa:**

Mm-hmm.

**Travis:**

And everything will go way, way better.

**Teresa:**

You can't expect to get what you want unless you tell someone about it. Nobody's a mind-reader.

**Travis:**

Exactly. Um, Leslie asked, "In same-sex engagement, how do you decide who wears the engagement ring, or do both of you, or neither?"

**Teresa:**

Um, once again, this is about communicating with your partner. You both can wear it. Neither can wear it. You—

**Travis:**

I actually think everybody should wear an engagement ring. Period. I was a little bit cheesed when we got engaged that you got bling, and I didn't.

**Teresa:**

[laughs]

**Travis:**

I also want people to know that I am taken. You know what I mean?

**Teresa:**

[laughs]

**Travis:**

Like, I was a little bit miffed. Now, I wear two wedding rings. I wear one on each hand, 'cause—

**Teresa:**

Just for fun.

**Travis:**

... I really want people to know how married I am.

**Teresa:**

[laughs] Um, it really is up to you. You can... And I am, I'm sorry I didn't get you one, dear.

**Travis:**

That's okay. I forgive you.

**Teresa:**

What about that, uh, that Fantasy Football ring?

**Travis:**

I do. I have several Fantasy Football championship rings now.

**Teresa:**

[laughs]

**Travis:**

Thank you very much. But I think what you're saying is true. And it's kind of what we discussed throughout, like, what may be right for you, may not be right for some.

**Teresa:**

Right.

**Travis:**

Different stroke, for different folks.

**Teresa:**

Aww, thanks.

**Travis:**

Um, and I think, that if you're like, "You know what? Neither one of us wants to wear a ring." Cool. "Both of us wants to wear a ring." Cool. "We wanna get tattoos." Cool. "We are gonna wear a locket with pictures." Great. Like, whatever you wanna do—

**Teresa:**

Right.

**Travis:**

... no one... You're never gonna not be engaged because you did it wrong.

**Teresa:**

Exactly.

**Travis:**

You know what I mean? Like, no one's gonna say, like, "Well, you're not really engaged. You know, 'cause you got lockets, instead of rings." Like, okay, cool, man. Like, you're not... It's not a legally binding anything anymore, at least not here, in America, when you get engaged. Like, it's a promise you're making to each other—

**Teresa:**

Mm-hmm.

**Travis:**

... so however that promise manifests between the two of you, is the right way to do it.

**Teresa:**

Agreed.

**Travis:**

You know what? I think that's gonna do it for us. Um, I'm sure that there's a lot more to talk about weddings, and we 100% totally will, on future wedding episodes.

Uh, thank you so much for joining us. Thank you for rating, reviewing, and subscribing on iTunes. We really, really appreciate it.

Um, and you know, maybe, listen, let's have a heart-to-heart, listener. Maybe you're listening to that, and you just completely glossed over it, auditorally-speaking, or maybe you heard it, and you were like, "I don't know that I'm ever gonna rate, review, subscribe. Meh."

That's okay. Um, but I would really appreciate it. It only takes a second. And like three reviews a day, three reviews a week, would be huge. Um, it doesn't take much to bump us right up those old iTunes charts, and we really appreciate it. And we also appreciate you telling a friend, saying, "Hey. Uh, I know you guys were talking about getting engaged. Maybe check out this episode. They just talked about diamond rings. How fascinating."

Um, and I do wanna encourage again, uh, go listen to the Stuff You Should Know episode about, um, about diamond rings. It's really, really good.

**Teresa:**

I would like to thank everyone who has joined our Facebook group and that the discussion between, um, our Facebook group members is starting to really pick up. I appreciate that. Um, and I really am interested in hearing what everybody has to say, as far as, like, someone who has a manners conundrum that they need help with. Please, go help them. See what we can do for each other.

**Travis:**

I'd also like to, since we were talking about it, uh, our, our kind of engagement story, a little bit, on this show. I'd love to hear your guys' engagement experiences. So, if you wanna go on the Facebook group, um, let's start a thread there and talk about engagement and what our history is and how we felt about it. Uh, you can also tweet at us, @ShmannersCast. Um, you know, it's the, probably the fastest way to get in touch with us. And every week, we'll tweet what the show topic is going to be, and you can tweet questions at us.

I also wanna encourage everyone to go check out all the other amazing Maximum shows. There are some pretty incredible ones, and I think you'll like all of them.

I also wanna thank you to Brent "Brentalfloss" Black for our intro and outro theme. It's pretty amazing, and you can—

**Teresa:**

[laughs]



**Travis:**

... get it, um, as a ringtone. If you have an Apple device, just go, like, on your iPhone or your iPad or whatever, and go to the iTunes store. And in Ringtones, search for Shmanners, S-H-M-A-N-N-E-R-S. Um, and download it, and then you'll get to hear our amazing ringtone anytime somebody calls you or texts you.

**Teresa:**

And, as always, thank you to Kayla M. Wasil for our beautiful, uh, banner and cover art.

**Travis:**

Yes, it is quite amazing. Um, and once again, thank you for listening. That's gonna do it for us. 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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