

## Shmanners 26: Pools and Beaches

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**Travis:**

Welcome to the odcast.

**Teresa:**

Notice how there's no P in it.

**Travis:**

It's Shmanners.

[theme music plays]

**Travis:**

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

**Teresa:**

And I'm your wife host, Teresa McElroy.

**Travis:**

You're listening to Shmanners.

**Teresa:**

It's extraordinary etiquette...

**Travis:**

For ordinary occasions. Hello, my darling.

**Teresa:**

Hello.

**Travis:**

Welcome to another, uh, blistering summer day here in Los Angeles, California.

**Teresa:**

It has been quite hot as of late.

**Travis:**

I think it reads 286 degrees the other day.

**Teresa:**

[laughs] It wasn't... wasn't quite that hot.

**Travis:**

Uh, I'm pretty sure.

**Teresa:**

[laughs]

**Travis:**

I walked outside, and the trees had melted.

**Teresa:**

[laughs]

**Travis:**

It was real bad.

**Teresa:**

You know, I actually did see footage of people in India where the roads are melting, and their shoes would get stuck in the roads.

**Travis:**

No way.

**Teresa:**

Ugh. Awful.

**Travis:**

It's, I mean, I think we've all heard the expression, hot enough to fry an egg.

**Teresa:**

Yes.

**Travis:**

You know, it's hot out there. When it gets hot out there—

**Teresa:**

Global warming is real, people.

**Travis:**

... when it gets hot out there, you seek out a refreshing dip in the pool or maybe a swim at the beach.

**Teresa:**

Yeah.

**Travis:**

Not me, but like normal people do.

**Teresa:**

[laughs]

**Travis:**

I'm not so keen on the ocean, uh, but normal people are, I'm told.

**Teresa:**

You like to wade and stand in pools.

**Travis:**

That's true. As long as I can see my feet, I'll go in water all day long. I'll walk in a stream. I'll go in the shallow oceans. I really look forward to one day visiting one of those, uh, like, Jamaican beaches where it's just blue water, and you can see, like, through the water forever.

**Teresa:**

Sounds lovely.

**Travis:**

I'm on board with that, but as soon as I can't [laughs] see my feet, no thank you. That's where sharks and stingrays and jellyfish and sharp shells live.

**Teresa:**

Would you call yourself a proficient swimming or an adequate—

**Travis:**

I am an ade—

**Teresa:**

... swimmer?

**Travis:**

If I fell out of a boat, I would not die.

**Teresa:**

Okay.

**Travis:**

That is, that is the best way to put it. But if you needed someone to race across a lake to save a drowning child, I am not your man.

**Teresa:**

[laughs]

**Travis:**

It is not me.

**Teresa:**

I actually, uh, participated in competitive swimming throughout my childhood.

**Travis:**

Yes.

**Teresa:**

I am, uh, I'm not quite sure if my certification is still recent, but I was a career lifeguard. I life guarded for 15 years. And I was a swim teacher for eight of those years.

**Travis:**

And, uh, she's being modest. When she says swim teacher, she was the most demanded swim teacher at the pool that she worked at. Like, she had to, like, turn people away, her schedule was so full. She's a pretty rocking swimming instructor.

**Teresa:**

And yet I have not ever given you a lesson.

**Travis:**

No, and I don't intend for that to ever happen.

**Teresa:**

[laughs]

**Travis:**

Um, I'm 32. I'm as good at swimming as I'm ever going to be.

**Teresa:**

It's never too late.

**Travis:**

Mm.

**Teresa:**

Uh, one of my, uh, students, I believe she was in her middle 60s, early 70s.

**Travis:**

Okay. Well, I tell you what. When I get to my mid-60s, you can start training me on swimming then. Does that sound like a deal?

**Teresa:**

Oh, boy.

**Travis:**

So, uh, we're dancing around our topic for this week, but we're talking about pool etiquette and beach etiquette.

**Teresa:**

Yes.

**Travis:**

Um, and you know, this, uh, I was a little wary when we picked this topic, because I was afraid that this would be the kind of topic that sometimes, where it's just people telling us to tell other people, "Hey, tell people not to do this—"

**Teresa:**

Right.

**Travis:**

... rather than people asking. I just assumed everyone would know about beach etiquette, but we got so many questions. And I just feel like everybody goes to the pool or the beach, and then once they get there, they're so worried about how to behave that everybody just kind of, like, I

guess just tries to stay in their own little bubble. I don't know. Is, are pools and, like, beaches that recent a thing? Is this, like, a new—

**Teresa:**

Really, no. They aren't. Um, so some background, some history on swimming in pools and beaches. Um, way back in, uh, 2500 BCE, there are Egyptian hieroglyphs depicting swimming. So the Egyptians had been doing it. They had that river Nile right there.

**Travis:**

So at least that far back.

**Teresa:**

At least that far back, probably further. Um, also in 36 BCE, there are Japanese records describing swimming competitions. That's pretty cool. They had swim teams back in Japan. Um, but the earliest manmade surviving water tank used as a pool, um, is called the Great Bath.

**Travis:**

Okay.

**Teresa:**

It existed over 5,000 years ago in the Pakistani city settlement of, here we go—

**Travis:**

You can do it.

**Teresa:**

... Mohenjodaro.

**Travis:**

Nailed it. You got—

**Teresa:**

I don't think I nailed it.

**Travis:**

I think you nailed it. So I thought you were going to say Bath, which is like the big bath place in England, right?

**Teresa:**

Well, yes, but it wasn't the first one.

**Travis:**

Well, no, but when you say the Great Bath... [laughs] I think Bath. But maybe that's just where we get the English word bath from. Okay.

**Teresa:**

I didn't, I didn't find too much on that bath. I mean, there are lots of baths all over the Greco-Roman Empire, because that's one of the things that they were kind of famous for.

**Travis:**

So we think of pool as, like, I think modern day, like, swimming pools.

**Teresa:**

Mm-hmm.

**Travis:**

But they were, these were more like bathing pools, right, where, like, you would go for, like, a soak and—

**Teresa:**

Especially in the Roman Empire. The first baths were very small, modest, and they separated the genders usually. Um, but as the Roman Empire grew in wealth, the baths became larger and more elaborate and became open to both men and women. Um, and they were built using largely tax dollars.

**Travis:**

Interesting. So they were kind of like, uh, you know, government owned, uh, like, state national kind of pools. They were not private. People didn't have their own pools set up.

**Teresa:**

Well, if you were very, very wealthy or, uh, certain temples had their own religious baths. Um, but these baths were a lot like resorts. So they had little amenities like gyms or restaurants and shops and, and other things like that. Interesting tidbit, we talked about swimming and learning to swim, Plato was actually very for a proper swimming education, for children especially. Um, and he put it up there with mathematics, writing, and astronomy and all those other things, um, way back in 400 BCE.

**Travis:**

And the community center that you worked for was a Jewish Community Center, right?

**Teresa:**

Right.

**Travis:**

And didn't you tell me once that in the, oh, what's it called, the tradition, orthodox—

**Teresa:**

Mm-hmm.

**Travis:**

... that, uh, you are required to have your child learn to swim, right?

**Teresa:**

There are several passages in the Torah that can be interpreted as a mandate for parents to teach their children to swim or pay someone to teach them to swim.

**Travis:**

Interesting. So this is, you know, I grew up, I took swimming lessons at the Y. Uh, I think a lot of people probably took some childhood swimming lessons. And you have to think that probably, uh... it's interesting, I would be willing to bet if we dug a little bit more into the, um, you know, the, the anthropology, uh, angle of this... Is that right? Because I know that's also the name of a store.

**Teresa:**

[laughs]

**Travis:**

And now I'm worried that that's not really a thing. Anyways, that this is one of those things that started as, well, we needed to do it to survive. And then, like, only the, you know, the poorer classes had to swim to, like, catch fish. And then pretty soon, it became a thing that the leisure class did for fun. You know what I mean? And, like—

**Teresa:**

Mm-hmm.



**Travis:**

... hunting is that kind of thing, where we started off having to do it for food, and then pretty soon, there's, like, fox hunts and that kind of thing. So I wonder if swimming developed the same way.

**Teresa:**

I'm not quite sure, but it makes sense to me.

**Travis:**

Perfect. You know what? That's all I can ask, really.

**Teresa:**

[laughs]

**Travis:**

We're not a history podcast. We're a manners podcast.

**Teresa:**

So most historians, um, believe that Roman pool design culminated in 305 ACE, uh, when a massive 900,000 square foot vessel was built in Rome.

**Travis:**

Okay. So that's, like, real big.

**Teresa:**

Yes.

**Travis:**

Cool. [laughs]

**Teresa:**

That's like building a beach, I think.

**Travis:**

What did they build it for?

**Teresa:**

It, uh, swimming.

**Travis:**

Just to show off? Yeah.

**Teresa:**

[laughs] Just—

**Travis:**

Just because they could. That's kind of the Roman edict, isn't it? Like, hey, can we do this? Yeah, but why would we? I don't know, because we can? Yeah. Sure. Works for me. Go for it.

**Teresa:**

Yeah. Yeah. Let's talk about the first century, and this is when, uh, Nero, uh, is credited for building summer residence in the town of Baiae.

**Travis:**

What? [laughs]

**Teresa:**

It's on the Bay of Naples. It's got a lot of—

**Travis:**

How, how do you spell that? Does it have eight As in it?

**Teresa:**

It has B-A-I-A-E.

**Travis:**

Okay. Yeah. Baiae.

**Teresa:**

Uh, on the Bay of Naples.

**Travis:**

Oh, he started to write bay, but he fell off a cliff. [laughs]

**Teresa:**

[laughs] Maybe that's it. Uh, and it became, like, the first beach resort.

**Travis:**

Okay.

**Teresa:**

Um, so like, like you were saying, and the idea of things that are once lower class available to everybody, they become kind of upper class—

**Travis:**

Like the lobster.

**Teresa:**

Yes. Um.

**Travis:**

Look it up.

**Teresa:**

[laughs] In 1326, there was a town in Belgium called Spa.

**Travis:**

Okay. And that's probably where that came from. [laughs]

**Teresa:**

Well, spa means fountain.

**Travis:**

Mm-hmm.

**Teresa:**

Um, and this was where an ironmaster named Collin le Loup, le Loup, was cured of a long term illness when he bathed in the iron rich waters near Liege.

**Travis:**

That is the thing. Like, uh, we talk about bathing, and it wasn't just, like, to get clean.

**Teresa:**

Mm-hmm.

**Travis:**

For a long time, there were people who believed, like, the minerals in water and, you know, from these spas and everything. Like, you would take the water. Uh, and up, up through, like, the 1800s, early 1900s.

**Teresa:**

Absolutely. Uh, the Swiss resorts continued to develop up into the 1800s.

**Travis:**

The, the whole bottled water thing, that's not a new thing that happened in the '80s, folks, like that idea of, like, selling bottled water and telling people, like, "It's better for you than regular water."

**Teresa:**

Right.

**Travis:**

That's been going on a real long time.

**Teresa:**

A lot of these places were largely attributed to their medicinal qualities, Bath included.

**Travis:**

Interesting.

**Teresa:**

So moving on to North America, um, those spas were first started, like you said, in the 1800s. Um, resorts were built in East Virginia, New York, and West Virginia, mostly, because of all those f—

**Travis:**

Now, that should be, I'm, I'm going to be a stickler here, Eastern Virginia.

**Teresa:**

All right.

**Travis:**

And West Virginia, a completely separate state.

**Teresa:**

Yes.

**Travis:**

Okay.

**Teresa:**

I mean, that is, that is what I meant.

**Travis:**

I know, but you would be amazed how many people are unaware that West Virginia is its whole own state.

**Teresa:**

Well, because of the—

**Travis:**

For about 200 years now, folks.

**Teresa:**

... [laughs] because of the amount—

**Travis:**

150.

**Teresa:**

... of the, the springs trickling down the Appalachian mountains and all of those kind of things, you know, mineral waters and all that stuff. People built 'em right there.

**Travis:**

There's minerals in those hills.

**Teresa:**

Uh, the first big hotel, so the, the big one of note was built by Gideon Putnam in Saratoga Springs, New York, and it was centered around the hot sulfur spring there.

**Travis:**

Ew. Uh, sulfur smells like, uh, rotten eggs. That's disgusting.

**Teresa:**

That is what I've heard.

**Travis:**

I've smelled it.

**Teresa:**

Oh.

**Travis:**

Yeah. I've, I've been to a pond that had natural sulfur in it, and it smells like rotten eggs. I, I will say though, like, like I said, we can scoff at those people all we want to, but, uh, listen to Sawbones, folks. We still do stuff like that today, where you know, you get Smartwater, and you think it's healthier for you. It's like, yeah. Maybe it is.

**Teresa:**

Yeah.

**Travis:**

I don't know. What do I know? I'm not a doctor. But it costs more money, so it's got to be good, right? I'm that way. I'm not judging you.

**Teresa:**

[laughs]

**Travis:**

I do that. Teresa gets mad at me, because I always want to buy the one with electrolytes in it. I don't know what electrolytes do, but darn it, my body needs it. [laughs]

**Teresa:**

Moving on, um, so those were located around natural springs, but the first in ground swimming pools in the United States, um, most people agree that the oldest pool is in Texas called Deep Eddy Pool in Austin, Texas.

**Travis:**

Oh. Hi, hi, Griffin and Rachel.

**Teresa:**

[laughs] It was a bathhouse built during the Depression, um, by the Works Progress Administration, putting people to work. And the pool began as a swimming hole in the Colorado River, then turn into a resort in the 1920s, and today is still a popular pool operated by the City of Austin.

**Travis:**

And when I think about, like, the beach sites, I'm also thinking of that, like, early 1900s, like, a boardwalk, people in those, like, striped bathing suits, women in, like, you know, ankle to wrist bathing suits, and that kind of thing.

**Teresa:**

Right. Um, that goes back to 1884, uh, where Coney Island is really kind of a big resort town there, um, where they have, you know, funnel cakes and hot dog contests and, and roller coasters and stuff.

**Travis:**

What?

**Teresa:**

[laughs] So—

**Travis:**

They've got all those modern wonders just in one place?

**Teresa:**

... so this became a real seaside vacation spot, um, and multiple hotels were built on Brighton Beach.

**Travis:**

I've heard of that. That was in that one play by Neil Simon.

**Teresa:**

Yes.

**Travis:**

Also, I assume, other things too.

**Teresa:**

[laughs]

**Travis:**

So then, when did, when did we start to kind of evolve into more of the, the modern day idea of the beach— I mean, it doesn't sound that far off. People go to the beach. They swim in the water. They eat some food. They get sunburned, and they go home. I don't know how much more advancement there could be in pool and beach technology.

**Teresa:**

Well, for pools, really, uh, it happened, uh, the most evolution during this time up until the 1920s was with the water treatment—

**Travis:**

Okay.

**Teresa:**

... that was developed. Um, so they developed in 1910. Uh, that was the first attempt to sterilize a pool using chlorine, whereas before, you would just kind of keep the water in until it looked dirty and empty all of it out and then put new water in.

**Travis:**

I'm willing to bet that in the early days of using chlorine, they did not have the measurements correct, and there was probably a lot of chemical burns.

**Teresa:**

Um, okay. So this is one of the things about chlorine, is it is measurable in parts per million.

**Travis:**

Uh-huh.

**Teresa:**

Uh, and working at a pool for a long time, um, one of the things that people get confused by is the idea of the burns in your eyes and, and mucus membranes, which are not directly caused by chlorine, because chlorine evaporates quite quickly.

**Travis:**

Okay.

**Teresa:**

Um, those are actually caused by the pH.

**Travis:**

Oh.

**Teresa:**

And I'll get into why, what affects the pH, but bather load is something that really affects the chlorine, um, because the more people you have in and out of the water, churning up the water, getting the water on their skin, the more chlorine you actually need in parts per million, because like I said, it



evaporates quickly. It stays on your skin, which is why you have that smell. Um, so people are [laughs] kind of like chlorine sponges, almost.

**Travis:**

Okay.

**Teresa:**

You get into the water, and it immediately attaches to you, because that's what it does.

**Travis:**

Got it.

**Teresa:**

So chemical burns were probably not so much of a problem from the chlorine, because it does evaporate so quickly. Um, but if people especially were peeing in the pools—

**Travis:**

What? Who would do such a thing?

**Teresa:**

... that would definitely affect the pH.

**Travis:**

Got it. And when did, uh, we start having super cool hot tub parties? Was that—

**Teresa:**

[laughs]

**Travis:**

... just in the '70s? Or were people doing that before then?

**Teresa:**

I bet people were doing it before then.

**Travis:**

Yeah. The hot tub wasn't invented in the '70s?

**Teresa:**

No.

**Travis:**

Okay.

**Teresa:**

Remember that big pool that I talked about, the Roman one?

**Travis:**

Uh-huh.

**Teresa:**

That was heated.

**Travis:**

What?

**Teresa:**

Yeah.

**Travis:**

Get out.

**Teresa:**

By big furnaces underneath the, uh, the bottom of the pool.

**Travis:**

What can't those Romans do?

**Teresa:**

I know.

**Travis:**

Okay.

**Teresa:**

Um, so by the end of the '20s, public pools and baths were very common in the vast majority of US cities.

**Travis:**

Interesting.

**Teresa:**

Oh, by the way, that, uh, swimsuit you talked about, the stripy one—

**Travis:**

Uh-huh.

**Teresa:**

... uh, was popularized by a Jantzen Red diving girl. Um, and it was a figure hugging wool jersey.

**Travis:**

Get out. Wool?

**Teresa:**

I know. Wool in the pool. It sounds so strange to us now, but—

**Travis:**

And it also rhymes.

**Teresa:**

That's just what, that's what they had.

**Travis:**

Ew.

**Teresa:**

Yeah. Gross, kind of.

**Travis:**

Man, if you ever want to look at, like, it just, looking at those old timey bathing suits always makes me think, like, you would think that this would've killed off bathing and swimming forever. Like, you do that one time and you're like, "Oh, I hate this. Okay. Bye."

**Teresa:**

[laughs]

**Travis:**

Like, your tan lines used to be your hands got sunburned. You had wrist tan lines, and from your boater hat. Ugh. Ugh. No, no, no.

**Teresa:**

So into the 1930s, hotels began having pools built as marketing tools. So in addition to going to a resort town on a beach, you could also go to a resort that has its own pool.

**Travis:**

Interesting. And then you could have it indoors if you wanted to or c—

**Teresa:**

If you wanted to.

**Travis:**

... enclosed.

**Teresa:**

Yeah. Um, social elites such as movie stars like Judy Garland, Ginger Rogers, Bing Crosby, they all frequented these places.

**Travis:**

Interesting.

**Teresa:**

So after World War II, uh, swimming pools became kind of a status symbol for people, and this is when more and more people began to realize that part of their American dream was being able to take a backyard vacation in their own swimming pool.

**Travis:**

I also imagine a lot of that was being pushed with, like, the backyard barbecue and showing, competing with your neighbors—

**Teresa:**

Mm-hmm.

**Travis:**

... to see who had the nicest lawn, all that stuff.

**Teresa:**

All of that stuff.

**Travis:**

Suddenly, we find ourselves with, everybody's coming home with so much more free time now that the war is over. You've got to compete with your friends.

**Teresa:**

Yeah.

**Travis:**

What's interesting about that is nowadays, we watch a lot of, like, the HGTV, like House Hunters and that kind of thing. More often than not, nowadays you hear people talk about what a burden pools are, especially if you have kids. They can be incredibly dangerous with small children around, um, if they're not fenced in or covered or something like that. So more often than not—

**Teresa:**

Absolutely.

**Travis:**

... now, it's kind of a turnoff, especially if you understand the amount of maintenance that goes into having a pool, where people will see the pool in the backyard of the house they're looking at and they're like, "No. No. No. No. No. No."

**Teresa:**

[laughs]

**Travis:**

I heard somebody on one be like, "I guess we could fill it in." [laughs] It was like, oh, God.

**Teresa:**

Well, working at pools for many, many years, as I mentioned, one of the things that we would call the pool is the money pit—

**Travis:**

Yeah.

**Teresa:**

... because like I said, chlorine evaporates quickly. The, you have to continually add those chemicals, keep it balanced, add water, um, any th—like, especially again, if you have a high bather load.

**Travis:**

If the ground underneath shifts and you get a big crack in your pool.

**Teresa:**

Right. Yeah.

**Travis:**

Ew.

**Teresa:**

And, um, if you drain a pool too quickly, it can cause buckling on the bottom, which again, you'll need to fill in those cracks.

**Travis:**

Mm-hmm.

**Teresa:**

So let's fast forward to 1971, where the next big thing in pools, besides all the different types of, um, industrial materials mostly credited to World War II, used in making pools—

**Travis:**

Uh-huh.

**Teresa:**

... um, in French Polynesia, they begin to introduce the next must have amenity, the underwater bungalow.

**Travis:**

The what now?

**Teresa:**

The underwater bungalow. So basically, you would build a pool with glass walls and—

**Travis:**

Oh, I've seen this in, like, oh, like the old, like, Vegas, uh, where they would show footage of people, like, swimming down by the glass as you were, like, having drinks in the bar, and you could see people swimming.

**Teresa:**

Exactly.

**Travis:**

Do people still do that now?

**Teresa:**

I guess so.

**Travis:**

I've never seen that in person. I saw that in, like, old resort footage from, like, the '60s and se— or I guess '70s and '80s. I don't know that I've ever seen that as—

**Teresa:**

Well, I have seen commercials on, um, on Hulu and Netflix and whatnot where it's that, um, that double decker house were, like, the first layer is all underwater.

**Travis:**

Uh-huh.

**Teresa:**

But it's not in a pool. It's usually in, like, a crystal clear beach or something—

**Travis:**

Okay.

**Teresa:**

... where, like—

**Travis:**

There is a—

**Teresa:**

You haven't seen those?

**Travis:**

No. But now I'm thinking about the underwater hotel that I think is called the Neptune that I think would be the best setting for a horror movie ever. But, uh, that's a different story altogether. Okay. So we have the underwater bungalow—

**Teresa:**

Right.

**Travis:**

... in the '70s.

**Teresa:**

Mm-hmm.

**Travis:**

I'm, I'm really racking my brain trying to think of anything that's changed that much in, in swimming in the last, I mean, I was born in '83, so in the last 32 years. Um.

**Teresa:**

Well, um, in the, in the mid—'80s, that's when people started landscaping their pools to look a little less like pools, so—

**Travis:**

Oh, and more like, like grottoes.

**Teresa:**

More like grottoes or things that are a little more natural springs looking. But other than that, it hasn't changed very much.

**Travis:**

When did people start doing salt water in their pools rather than chlorine? Because I've heard about that, mostly in hot tubs and stuff. Do people—

**Teresa:**

Well, salt water filtration is an example of, um, something that's actually been around a long time, uh, but the technology is something that is, has just recently in the last 10 to 20 years become more commercially viable, um, because it was more for, like, large pools because it, it's, it's hard to, it's not hard to maintain. It's hard to install and get everything going.

Um, so for instance, if your pool in your backyard is built for chlorine and sand filtration, the whole thing has to be retrofitted. They're usually not very compatible. Um, so salt water filtration was reserved for large municipal pools. But now, the technology has improved so that people can get it in their own backyards.



**Travis:**

Great. So that's a little bit about the history of beach and pool going. Um, we're going to come back here in a second, and we're going to answer your questions and talk about the etiquette of beach and pool going. Uh, but first, here's a word from another Max Fun show.

--

**Speaker 3:**

Podcasts.

**Speaker 4:**

Podcasts.

**Speaker 5:**

Podcasts.

**Speaker 3:**

Podcasts.

**Speaker 4:**

[laughs]

**Speaker 3:**

They're audio programs that—

**Speaker 5:**

Tell smart stories.

**Speaker 4:**

In innovative ways.

**Speaker 6:**

Using editing techniques like this.

**Speaker 5:**

Like this.

**Speaker 4:**

Like this.

**Speaker 3:**

Like this?

**Speaker 7:**

Really?

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But let's face it. All that smart stuff can be exhausting.

**Speaker 3:**

That's where Stop Podcasting Yourself comes in.

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Stop Podcasting Yourself.

**Speaker 5:**

The stupid show that smart people love.

**Speaker 6:**

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**Speaker 3:**

Or maximumfun.org.

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**Travis:**

Okay. We're back. Before we head into the questions—

**Teresa:**

Mm-hmm.

**Travis:**

... is there any kind of, like, gen— I mean, you worked at a pool for so many years, just kind of gen— I mean, like, we know stuff like don't run around the pool, no splashing, you know, those kind of, like, pool behaviors. Is there any kind of general tips or, you know, etiquette things you would point out to people who are going to a pool?

**Teresa:**

Well, I would always point out to make sure that you read the rules. Um, rules are usually very well posted, very clear, and they differ from place to place, so follow all posted signs and rules, and you're halfway there.

**Travis:**

Okay.

**Teresa:**

Other than that, um, you really need to think of the pool, even though you're having a great time and probably not playing with the other pool-goers in a traditional sense, it is a shared space. Um, so loud music, uh, roughhousing, splashing like you said, uh, that, uh, that infringes on other people's good time is generally frowned upon.

**Travis:**

Okay. So speaking of, I would say that the elbows on the table question, the biggest question that we got a lot of was about appropriate bathing wear—

**Teresa:**

Mm-hmm.

**Travis:**

... for a public pool or a beach. And I'm of two minds on this, and I'd love to get your take on it, because on the one hand, I think people should be able to wear whatever they want to, you know. Like, uh, no one's making you look at anyone. No one's making you pay attention to someone else's body, and what they want to wear is their business.

On the other hand, I think you also introduce, like, there are, you know, kids around or fam—it's a family pla—you know what I mean? There's the old, traditional Travis who sits and goes, "Well, you could be respectful of the other people there."

And then there's the new modern Travis who wants to sit there and go, "Hey, it's their body. They should be able to dress however they want to." I'm talking about all people here. You know what I mean?

**Teresa:**

Exactly. And I think that that's a kind of thing where you need to, uh, maybe visit the website of the place that you're going to or talk to people who have already been there and see what the general populace wears. I, I visited several websites of resorts that asked anyone who would be wearing a, um, a bikini to keep their, uh, their buttocks covered—

**Travis:**

Okay.

**Teresa:**

... and said the same for everyone who would be wearing a Speedo, that that was not something that they encouraged. So they encourage trunks instead of Speedos.

**Travis:**

So in that circumstance, you should follow the guidelines of the place that you're staying.

**Teresa:**

Right.

**Travis:**

Now, if you're going to some place like a beach or a lake or somewhere th— where they don't have kind of guideline rules like that, where, uh, would you advise erring on the side of modesty, or going with, like, a hey, if they're showing up to a beach, you've got to expect to see what you see, and everything's fine?

**Teresa:**

I would say that you should probably cover up anything you wouldn't want sand in.

**Travis:**

That's a good answer. I, I think, okay, I guess my takeaway is this. I wish we lived in a world in which everybody was comfortable enough, uh, with the human body, and that it wasn't a thing, and that we could get beyond, um, being at times, you know, grownup 14-year-olds about it.

Um, but, but we don't live in that world, and I think until you do, you do have to have some modicum of modesty, unless you're trying to make a point and you're trying to make a statement, at which point I support you and go for it.

**Teresa:**

Like I said, I think that you should cover up anything you don't want sand in.

**Travis:**

Mm-hmm.

**Teresa:**

You should also be careful about how much you expose, just because skin cancer and the sun.

**Travis:**

That's also true.

**Teresa:**

You know, you're, the more that you expose to direct sunlight, the more sunscreen you're going to have to put on to protect yourself. Um, and a lot of areas of the body that are considered immodest by some standards are quite tender. [laughs]

**Travis:**

And I want to get on a little bit of a soapbox here. My mother passed away from skin cancer—

**Teresa:**

Mm-hmm.

**Travis:**

... um, from melanoma. And a lot of people consider skin cancer to be this, like, super easy to beat, um, cancer where they say, like, "Oh, that's the easy cancer. You just go, and you get the mole cut off." And I would say, uh, while that's true in most cases, like any cancer, if it spreads, it's incredibly deadly.

**Teresa:**

Exactly.

**Travis:**

And it can spread very, very quickly. Um, and you should not take skin cancer lightly. You should, you know, not burn, uh, on purpose. I used to when I'd go to the beach. My mom and I both would, like, put on the, not the sunscreen, like, the oil—

**Teresa:**

Ugh.

**Travis:**

... that would make you tan faster and, like, brown up real hard. There was a time where I was going to, like, a, a, my mom and I both were going to tanning beds all the time, because we liked looking tan.

And the thing is, then you find out that skin cancer is no joke, and it's very serious, and it's like, "Oh, I, I should've been taking care of myself so much better." So wear your sunscreen. Don't stay in the sun for hours and hours. And if it's a cloudy day, you can still get sun damage. You can still get sunburned through clouds.

**Teresa:**

That's right.

**Travis:**

Be careful.

**Teresa:**

When I was working at pools, if we ever came across anything that was less than SPF 15, it went straight in the trash, um, because people lay, they leave sunscreen all the time. They often became kind of, um, community sunscreens for people who forgot them or for the lifeguards or whatever. But a burned lifeguard can get sent home at the pools that I worked at.

**Travis:**

Good. It's not safe. You shouldn't do it. You know what I mean? And also, tanning is another thing that falls under that leisure class thing, where tanning used to be a thing that happened because you had to work out in the fields, and you would get burned by the sun. And then pretty soon, the leisure class wanted to look like they had their workout in the fields, so they'd get burned. Like, it's—

**Teresa:**

Yeah.

**Travis:**

... I don't think there's anything inherently beautiful about a tan, and it's all through, you know, advertisements and people telling you that that's how you're supposed to look, and it's—

**Teresa:**

But if you like it, there are some really great fake tans out there.

**Travis:**

Exactly. Go for it. So let's—

**Teresa:**

Go get it in a bottle.

**Travis:**

... let's talk about some questions.

**Teresa:**

Okay.

**Travis:**

Um, this is a good one. This is from Rini on Twitter. "How far away should I be from the next group of people at the beach?" I can't tell you the number of times, like, I've put down a blanket or, you know, my towel, and somebody has basically sat right next to me. Like, you would think that we were there together.

**Teresa:**

Well, um, if it's a crowded beach, sometimes that's unavoidable. But there should be a, a clear walking path between your group and the next group, because nobody wants to have their towels walked on or whatever. So there should be a clear path.

Um, also, if you're setting up umbrellas, it is polite to make sure that you don't set up directly in front of another person's umbrella, because it really kind of spoils their view. Um, one of the nice things about the beach is we like to look at it.

So don't set up directly in front. You want to go to the left or to the right. And make sure that everybody has their space and their view and no, nothing is, like, obstructed.

**Travis:**

Do you also think that it has something to do with the context? Like, if you're there for a quiet day, you probably shouldn't set up next to, like, a family of eight?

**Teresa:**

Yes.

**Travis:**

And vice versa. Like, you know, uh, I usually find that, like, if you're close together with a bunch of other people who also just want to lie quietly in the sun, like, sure, be as close as you want.

But here's what you shouldn't do. You should be very careful when you pick up your towels and your blankets, that you don't whip sand in the eyes of everyone around you.

**Teresa:**

I was going to mention that. Yes. You should, if you need to clean your towel, you need to go downwind of the other people that you are with and out of the way so that you don't get sand on that.

**Travis:**

Uh, th—

**Teresa:**

Ouchie.

**Travis:**

... this question is from Fay, but it's actually from our fan five-year-old Max, uh, and Max says, "No radios at the beach." But that's not really a question.

**Teresa:**

[laughs] So this information I found was a little conflicting. There are certainly sites that say, "Don't use a radio. Um, use your headphones or whatever."



But I think that if you are going to have a radio with you, um, it needs to be, uh, well, first of all, it needs to be quieter. It needs to be so that only you and people in, like, maybe a five foot radius could hear it. Um, and it also needs to be something generally soothing, so probably not, like, heavy metal. [laughs]

**Travis:**

A, a good rule of thumb, just like cologne, you shouldn't force your likes onto the senses of others. If they come over to join you and they can hear your music, great. But if they're sitting, you know, if you're sitting there listening to music and they put down a blanket next to you while you're already listening to music, that's theirs to deal with. They could've sat somewhere else. But if you sit down next to someone and put music on, uh, that's not so cool.

**Teresa:**

Right. So, so keep it quiet, and keep it calm.

**Travis:**

Uh, this is from Tony on Twitter. "Beach toys. Kids want them, but then other kids take them, and then what?"

**Teresa:**

So, um, in general, if you go to the beach with a group and someone within your group has toys, um, I would say that those toys are available to that group. But if there is ever a doubt as to who the toy, whether it's a toy for playing in the sand, or if it's more of an adult toy like a floaty or a kickboard or something, it, you need to have permission to use it. And if you can't find the owner, you can't ask permission. You can't use it.

**Travis:**

I would also say that if you're worried about beach toys getting mixed up or disappearing, go to, like, the Dollar Store and get, like, 99 cent buckets and shovels and stuff. And then who cares if they disappear? You spent \$5 total on 'em. You know what I mean?

**Teresa:**

That's a great idea. Yeah.

**Travis:**

Uh, this question is from, uh, Melissa on Facebook. "How long is too long to save a spot or chair for someone who will be joining you?"

**Teresa:**

Actually, Emily Post's, uh, Institute has a weigh in on this. Um, she's of the opinion that it's okay to save some chair for family or friends coming later, but only if they'll be there within 20 minutes to a half an hour, because at that point, things could get crowded. You need to either lay on it or let it go.

**Travis:**

Mm-hmm. Towels don't save seats. Butts save seats. That's what I was always told.

**Teresa:**

Um, after 20 minutes to half an hour, I agree.

**Travis:**

This question is from Jessica. We talked about, uh, wearing bathing suits, but Jessica wants to know, can, uh, can she just wear the bathing suit and towel to a public pool? Or do you need to wear clothes over it and change? Um, like, at a hotel resort or even a community pool, do you, do you have to show up dressed and change, either take off your clothes to reveal a swimming suit or change into a swimming suit? Or can you just roll up in the swimming suit and towel?

**Teresa:**

I would say that it depends on how far you have to go and also the, uh, policies at said resort. I know there are some resorts, uh, in, in Las Vegas where they actually have people stationed at the doors to make sure you don't go through the hotel lobby in your wet bathing suit. You need to be changed. You need to have, uh, ser— like, a t-shirt on or a, a beach cover-up or something.

Um, and so I think that it, it's always better to err on the side of overdressed for the, the pool, where you can take layers off, instead of just having your swimsuit and nothing to put on over top.

**Travis:**

You should also, and this is just, I don't know how this fits into manners or etiquette, this is my personal, uh, pet peeve and, uh, personally, if you're going to a resort or hotel and you intend to swim in the pool, you should take some sandals on the trip with you or something. You should not walk barefoot through a hotel. I think—

**Teresa:**

Correct.

**Travis:**

... I think that that is, uh, not hygienic. Um, I think it's, uh, it's just not a good call, um, especially since you could be walking back with wet feet across a carpet. You should take some sandals with you if you intend to swim, or some kind of appropriate slip on footwear, or wear your regular shoes down to the pool and back.

**Teresa:**

I agree.

**Travis:**

Um, so real quick, I can't remember if we had a question about this or not, but I wanted to touch on it. Since your time working at a pool, what is the appropriate shower procedure? Do you shower before you get in the pool? Do you shower after? Do you do both? Do you really need to shower?

**Teresa:**

Most pools have posted signs that recommend showering or rinsing off before entering the pool.

**Travis:**

But do you need to do it?

**Teresa:**

Um, I would say yes, you do need to do it. Um, there is some debate as opposed to putting on your sunscreen. Does it wash off? Most sunscreens, if you put it on the recommended 15 minutes and let it completely dry before you get wet again, it will pretty much do its job for two hours or so, when you should reapply, um, especially if you are excessively toweling off, you should reapply sooner.

Um, but the shower isn't to get the sunscreen off. It's to get the hair products out. It's to get the dirt and sand off your body. It's to do all those other things that interfere with the cleanliness of the pool. And you know, pools can take a little bit of that, but if everybody walked in the pool with the dirt of the day on them, then the pool is not going to be as clean as it would, as it would be otherwise.

**Travis:**

Uh, this question is from Mike on Twitter. "At what point are complaints of the water being too cold valid?"

**Teresa:**

Um, I think that you need to consider what the pool is built for. Um, lap pools are generally kept a lot cooler because you are working out inside the water, whereas therapy pools are kept a lot warmer. Pools for children and infants are also kept warmer.

But you want to try and figure out, okay, well, it's a really sunny day. It's probably better that the pool is cooler so it feels a little more refreshing. Or this is an indoor pool, so it's going to be a little warmer just because of the air not, um, not coming in from outside.

So how cold is too cold? I would say that if you're spending more than two hours in a pool that is below 68 degrees, that's too cold.

**Travis:**

Okay. Um, this question's from Elizabeth, and I'm going to, uh, dovetail it into a bigger question. "At mine," I assume Elizabeth means at the pool, "There are signs saying, 'Don't climb fountain.' Kids do anyways. Should I complain?"

And I want to dovetail this into a bigger question, which is I think that a pool or the beach is probably one of the times, if not the most time, that someone would maybe have issues with the way someone else's children are behaving.

**Teresa:**

Mm-hmm.

**Travis:**

Um, uh, and I don't think you should ever tell anyone how to raise their kids or try to, like, fix someone else's kids, but at a certain point, there is a danger issue.

**Teresa:**

Right.

**Travis:**

There is a safety issue. When do you say something?

**Teresa:**

When confronted with that situation, if I were with my children, my future children, um, I would make it a teaching moment and explain to my children in the area by the sign, "Do not climb on fountain or by the fountain." Listen, kids, we saw that there's a sign that says, "Do not climb fountain." Please don't climb this fountain. It's not safe.

And then hopefully, there may be other people in the area who will listen to you teaching your own children, without you having to teach their children. You know what I mean? Um, but I—

**Travis:**

Yeah. But is there a tone of voice that you can take that's like, "Hey, guys. We're not supposed to run," even if you don't know the kids, where you're not scolding anybody but, like, you are an adult saying a thing? Like, is that okay? Or is that why lifeguards are around?

**Teresa:**

Generally, that's why lifeguards are around. Feel free to reinforce anything the lifeguard has said to your own children. Please do that. Um, but as far as you being the lifeguard for other children, that's probably not going to go over well.

**Travis:**

Mm-hmm.

**Teresa:**

Um, I remember the first pool I worked at was a neighborhood pool, and that's where I did my competitive swimming, and my parents took us there every day. And we knew everybody who went to the pool. So of course [laughs] my mom yelled at other kids for running and splashing.

And, and you know, there was this one kid who maintained that he could dive in the shallow end, and he did it all the time. He got kicked out a lot. But anyway, um, she would often police those children as well, because she knew their families. She knew their mothers.

Um, but I would not ever recommend you policing other people's children. In that case, if you feel that a child is in imminent danger, you could speak to them, like, about to die danger. Other than that, you should get the lifeguard or get a manager or some sort of supervisor person to take care of it.

**Travis:**

Uh, we got a question from Robin, and Robin is transgender, um, but because of the way the world works, still has to wear a bathing suit that would be appropriate for, uh, the female chest that Robin was born with. In general, to sum up the question, basically, like, sometimes Robin's friends and family give Robin a hard time about the fact that they need to wear, uh, an appropriate bathing suit for their former gender.

**Teresa:**

It's just not cool, and if, if they were asking for advice, are they as— they're asking for advice on how to handle that, right?

**Travis:**

Yeah. They s—uh, how do I, uh, best give a strongly worded reply that will come across as serious but not make me sound like a jerk?

**Teresa:**

I mean, you can basically say that. Hey, guys. That's not cool.

**Travis:**

You would be amazed, in general, how effective a level, like, that is not okay, is, more than getting, like, hey, hey, come on. Like, I have found that whether it's dealing with people being a jerk on the Internet or a jerk in real life, it's, you, you don't have to ignore it, but you also don't have to rise to it. You can just say, "That is not okay." And, and they'll, they'll usually get pretty embarrassed about the thing that they said. I highly recommend it in situations like that.

**Teresa:**

[laughs]

**Travis:**

Um, so this was a question from Joe, and I think that this is a question anyone who has ever stepped into a pool has had, and that is this. "Pool urination? We've all done it, but is it wrong? How wrong? How ashamed should I be retroactively for what I did as a kid/teen?"

**Teresa:**

Uh, we touched on this just a little bit earlier, and I don't think [laughs] that you should be retroactively ashamed, because you can't go back in time and fix it.

Um, but at a beach, um, I know that fish pee in the water but, like, you should really take into consideration the amount of people in there and, uh,

where you are in the water. And if you really can't make it to a designated restroom onshore, you need to move away from everyone, um, like if the, if the, the surf is coming in, you need to move away from people that way so that they don't get your pee up in the surf next to them. You know what I mean?

**Travis:**

And listen, the ocean is huge, but I think what you're talking about is the difference between, is it biologically wrong? No. Is it sociologically wrong? Yes.

**Teresa:**

Yes.

**Travis:**

Like, if you were standing next to someone, would you look them in the face and say, "I just peed in the water"?

**Teresa:**

[laughs]

**Travis:**

If not, then the answer is no. But the question still stands from Joe, "How wrong is it?"

**Teresa:**

Okay. So let me break this down a little bit. I, as a swimming instructor, often spent six to eight hours in the water. I have, in my lifetime, peed in the pool.

**Travis:**

Gross. Divorce.

**Teresa:**

I do encourage people, though, to please use the restroom instead of the pool as a bathroom, because like I touched on earlier, the thing that really makes people the most uncomfortable in the water is the pH. And, um, pH and chlorine have a very interesting relationship, where they have an inverse relationship, where if the pH is higher, the chlorine has to work harder, so the chlorine level in parts per million goes down.

Your pee is something that contributes to high pH. It's what makes your eyes sting. Uh, it's one of the things that contributes to dry skin, although chlorine definitely contributes to dry skin. Um, but like I said, the m— the higher the pH, the more chlorine is necessary to maintain the level of disinfection that you need in a public pool.

**Travis:**

Got it.

**Teresa:**

So if everybody peed in the pool, there'd be s— you would have to continually pump that chlorine in very high levels—

**Travis:**

Okay.

**Teresa:**

... which would make everyone a little more uncomfortable.

**Travis:**

So it's not a matter of peeing in the pool is unhygienic.

**Teresa:**

Mm-hmm.

**Travis:**

It's a matter of it affects the chemistry of the pool, and if everybody did it willy-nilly, it would really affect, like, people's comfort levels in the pool, even if they didn't know that there was pee in the water.

**Teresa:**

Exactly.

**Travis:**

Got it.

**Teresa:**

Um, and I mean, it is a little unhygienic, especially if you're peeing in a crowded area, because although, again, I keep talking in parts per million, um, your urine does dissipate fairly quickly, it doesn't dissipate in as wide of an area as you think it might.



**Travis:**

Okay.

**Teresa:**

So if you are swimming directly next to someone, the odds that they will come in contact with a lot [laughs] of your urination is very high.

**Travis:**

I have one last question for you, and I bet everyone is wondering this at this point. Have you, in your experience, ever actually encountered a chemical that you put in a pool that changes color when someone pees in it?

**Teresa:**

I have not.

**Travis:**

I knew it.

**Teresa:**

And I'm not saying that it doesn't exist.

**Travis:**

I think it's a myth. I've never heard of it. I've never seen it. It's always just a thing that people say happens, and I don't think it happens.

**Teresa:**

I have not, in my experience, encountered one.

**Travis:**

Okay. If you have, I want... And I'm not saying—

**Teresa:**

[laughs]

**Travis:**

... a friend of a friend. I want to know that you have seen it work, not like somebody bought it and told you they had it. I want you. You have been in a pool. You have seen someone pee, and the water turned green or blue or whatever. Um, and then you can tweet at us @shmannerstcast, S-H-M-A-N-N-E-R-S. Every so often, someone tries to sneak a C in there. That would be Schmanners.

**Teresa:**

[laughs]

**Travis:**

That's not, that's not a thing. Uh, Schmanners is not what we're going for. Shmanners. Um, and you can join our Facebook group by searching Schmanners on Facebook, uh, in the group tab.

Let's see. Uh, we want to say thank you to Maximum Fun for hosting us and lots of other amazing podcasts, which if you haven't checked out by this point, like, what are you waiting for?

**Teresa:**

I know, right?

**Travis:**

It's the perfect summer, beach, pool listening thing. Pop your headphones in, and then you slather yourself in sunscreen, and you sit under an umbrella in your full, like, track suit—

**Teresa:**

[laughs]

**Travis:**

... and you don't get a single bit of sun. It'll be great. Uh, I also want to say thank you. We're, this is my first time. I'm very excited. Uh, I have been using an Ear Trumpet Labs mic for a long, long time, and I just got a second one, and I'm listening to it on headphones right now. And we sound incredible, as far as I'm concerned.

**Teresa:**

Smooth as velvet?

**Travis:**

So for those people who always wonder what kind of mics I use to record all my shows, the answer is Ear Trumpet Labs. They make these amazing, uh, microphones that are not only beautiful. They make them out of, like, these kind of retro plumbing parts. They look incredible. Uh, they also sound incredible, so I highly recommend them.

**Teresa:**

I have one last piece of advice for any beachgoers. Um, I recommend that you encourage your children, or if it is you digging holes in the sand, to please fill in those holes before you leave, um, because they are a hazard for people walking. They may fill with water or even just loose sand and cause, um, broken ankles.

**Travis:**

Yeah. Be careful.

**Teresa:**

Or worse.

**Travis:**

Be careful out there.

**Teresa:**

And one more thing. Please don't fake drown, uh, whatever you do. Not only is it not going to get you the kind of positive attention from the lifeguard you think it is, you could be preventing that lifeguard from saving another person's life who is actually in trouble.

**Travis:**

Uh, let's see. What else?

**Teresa:**

That's a little PSA for you.

**Travis:**

What else? We want to say thank you to Emily Post.

**Teresa:**

Uh-huh. Always. Uh, thank you to Brent "Brentalfloss" Black. Can I put it in the middle like that?

**Travis:**

Yeah.

**Teresa:**

Is that good? Okay. For our theme song. And that is available as a ringtone on iTunes.

**Travis:**

Um, we want to say thank you to Kayla M. Wasil for our beautiful art. Um, if you've looked at that art and you thought, "Mm. That was amazing," you are right. You are not a wrong person. You are a correct person. It is amazing, and it was done for us by Kayla M. Wasil.

Um, I also want to say, oh, this is just in time, tonight, uh, if you listen to this on Friday when it is released, tonight I am going to be on the, um, uh, Geek & Sundry and Smart Girls, uh, are teaming up to do a telethon, a 24 hour telethon benefiting the Muscular Dystrophy Association. It's going to be on, uh, Geek & Sundry's Twitch account, which I believe is [Twitch.com/geekandsundry](https://www.twitch.tv/geekandsundry).

But tonight at 7:00 PM Pacific Time, I am going to be on there along with, uh, my cohost on Interrobang, Tybee, and some other people. We're going to be doing, like, a rock band Battle of the Bands thing. We really want you to come out, watch, support, donate to help support the MDA. Um, that's going to be tonight, so don't miss it. 7:00 PM Pacific Time on Geek & Sundry's Twitch stream.

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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