

Shmanners 420: Living With Parents

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[theme music plays]

Travis: Hello, internet! I'm your husband host, Travis McElroy.

Teresa: And I'm your wife host, Teresa McElroy.

Travis: And you're listening to Shmanners.

Teresa: It's extraordinary etiquette...

Travis: For ordinary occasions. Hello, my dove.

Teresa: Hello, dear.

Travis: I'm really in my head right now because I realized as I was saying my name—for some reason I think I hit it in a weird way that made it sound like Travis Smackelroy.

Teresa: Hmm, I didn't notice.

Travis: It wasn't what I was going for, but now I'm thinking about it too much. How are you?

Teresa: Aww. I'm alright. I like your hat.

Travis: Tha—thank you. It's kind of halfcocked, like a cool dude.

Teresa: Like a cool dude!

Travis: Might start breakdancing at any moment, or perhaps—

Teresa: Hmm, let's not talk about breakdancing. It's kind of a thing on the internet right now.

Travis: Yeah, I don't—I—sure. Sure.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Ugh. What are we talking about this week?

Teresa: We are talking about living with your parents as an adult.

Travis: Yeah. Yeah.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: Yeah. Have you—now, I know that you lived with your parents—well, during college—

Teresa: I did not.

Travis: Oh. Um... for no period of time?

Teresa: No. No period of time.

Travis: You moved back—'cause you went to school—

Teresa: I went to school far enough away that I needed to live on campus. And then I came back to a closer school. But because I had lived off campus for the first year they were like, "Hmm. Do you wanna live on campus again?" And I was like, "Okay." So I did.

Travis: Okay. And then did you end up—so did you live on campus the rest of the time? Did you end up getting an apartment or something in—

Teresa: Getting an apartment close to, yeah.

Travis: When I graduated-

Teresa: I think I visited, like, once a week or something.

Travis: Yeah, that would track. Free food, free laundry. Yeah, why not?

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: When I graduated college, 'cause I went to school in Oklahoma and moved back I had, like, no life plans whatsoever. So I moved back in with Dad. And I think for a short while it was Griffin and I and Dad, back in my childhood home. And then Griffin moved out. And I think for, like, a while, like a year, it was just me and Dad living there. And that was very interesting, because the dynamic had very much shifted. Not to be a bummer, but after my Mom passed away, you know, it was just me and Dad in the house, and everything. And so—

Teresa: Well, and you were coming back as an adult who had lived on your own.

Travis: Yeah. But at that point it was very much—I don't know. It felt more like roommates. Plus, like, our schedules never seemed to line up.

Teresa: I think that's normal. We're gonna talk about that.

Travis: Okay, let's get into it then.

Teresa: First of all—

Travis: Parents! What are they? How long have there been parents?

Teresa: First of all—

Travis: Parents were invented in Ancient China.

Teresa: No.

Travis: No?

Teresa: No. This topic was submitted several times by several different listeners, and as always, you, listener, can send your topic ideas, or idioms, or etiquette questions, or kind words, to shmannerstcast@gmail.com. Alexx with two Xs reads each email lovingly, and keeps a running list of topics and

idioms and questions, so we can refer to them as we work through our episodes.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Um, often, so often...

Travis: So often.

Teresa: [laughs] Uh, we talk about returning back home, right? After maybe college, like you did. Um, but what used to happen is people did not leave.

Travis: Hm.

Teresa: Until they were married. Right? A lot of people pursued higher education, and if you did you did, like, boarding school, right? So you weren't really moved out on your own. You were out, and then you were still at home.

Travis: Well, a lot of the things we've talked about, right? Time periods of if you were, uh, like, lower class, right? If you were not a—if you were a have-not, you couldn't afford to, right? You were either married, or you needed a job or whatever. But even then, if you weren't gonna start your own family, right? The idea of independence, most people continued to work in the towns and cities that they grew up in, right? So there wasn't like, "I've gotta move away and find a job."

You would get apprenticed, you'd do that stuff, you would start a life. And once you were starting a family, then that would necessitate a place. If you were a have, right? If you were rich, like, most of the time, um, you didn't have, like, your own money. Like when you watch *Bridgerton*, right? It wasn't like they have a job, right? It's not like, uh, Benedict is getting his own income. It's all, like, family money or money he's been given to invest in things, right? And that's where his money comes from. But why move away when your house is gigantic, and everything you need is right there, right? Like...

Teresa: Those are two really great examples.

Travis: Thanks, babe!

Teresa: We're gonna be using the term multigenerational household a couple times. But this term doesn't really—didn't really exist until—I'm gonna make you guess when this term—

Travis: The term multigenerational household.

Teresa: —starts to be used as, like, current multigenerational households.

Travis: Was it post 1940?

Teresa: It was post 1940, but very specifically...

Travis: 1957. 1968. 1979.

Teresa: The 1970s.

Travis: Nailed it. Got it in one.

Teresa: Yep.

Travis: First try!

Teresa: Yep. Especially in the United States and in the UK, the 1970s is when we start to get this kind of distinction, right? Between multigenerational households, which had up until this point just been households.

Travis: Just been households.

Teresa: Right? And then single family homes, right?

Travis: Uh-huh. I'm betting it's, like, a real estate marketing thing that messed it up. Like diamonds. You know where it used to be like, yeah, it was all heirlooms and passed down or whatever. And then it started to be like,

well, I thought you loved her. Don't you want to give her her own diamond? Diamonds are forever. You don't pass it on. You keep it.

Teresa: I mean—

Travis: That's what diamonds are forever meant, by the way.

Teresa: Yeah, that you keep your own diamond.

Travis: That you keep your own diamond, that you're not passing your ring on.

Teresa: So you have to buy a new one.

Travis: Yeah!

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: That idea of like, diamonds are forever, isn't like, this is something that'll be in your family forever. It was literally saying like, yeah, but once you get your diamond ring, you're gonna hold onto that until you die. So if you have a daughter or a son who wants to get married or whatever, they need to get their own ring, 'cause that's your ring. Hold on to it. Don't give away your stuff.

So I assume that the housing thing was like, "Don't you wanna be independent? Do you want to start your own life, young man? Boop, boop, boop, boop, boop."

Teresa: Let's categorize that as capitalist conditioning.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Because there's a whole lot of facets, not just advertising, not just housing, not just media, all of it together.

Travis: Capitalism.

Teresa: Um, and probably what started it was the rebranding of the banking industry, right? Which would eventually lead to the American housing crisis in 2008.

Travis: Was this loans, when it became all about loans?

Teresa: Stuff like that, yeah.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: Stopped being about investment and protecting your money and started being about giving you loans and making money off you.

Teresa: Loans and interest and things like that, right?

Travis: [simultaneously] Yes, I see.

Teresa: The refinancing sort of ideal. Um, okay.

Travis: Gone are the George Baileys!

Teresa: [laughs] So—

Travis: Now they're all Mr. Potters.

Teresa: Up until the 1970s, we viewed, especially in the United States, we viewed independence differently. Because, like every other society on the planet up until this point, we all lived together. In fact, like, neighborhoods were shaped this way, right? Rural communities, when you had your family, you had the mom, the dad, the grandma, the grandpa, the aunts, and uncles, the kids, the grandkids. Like, all this stuff, right? You had them all, and they all helped out on the farm.

Even in metropolitan areas, like Chicago, neighborhoods were built this way because maybe your home wasn't big enough, but you could built a house next door, right? You could expand into the apartment complex, like,

throughout it. You would have multiple, like, floors of the same family. Things like that.

There are disadvantages to living this way. Because maybe people didn't always have a choice about whether or not they got to stay. Maybe they needed other people to survive, right?

Prior to the creation of social security in the United States, women working outside the home, most people in the United States were struggling to make a living. And so extended families had to live under one roof.

In fact, people often died in the same home they were born.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Leaving home at 19, 20, was unrealistic, because you couldn't afford it. But also because you had the social responsibility to care for your family.

Travis: Yeah. Wi—like... yes. That all tracks.

Teresa: 1970s.

Travis: Uh-huh.

Teresa: We have one of the first generations to actually—like, reaping their benefits of social security, right? And so these programs, especially the supplemental security income, welfare, right? Were introduced for needy, aged, and blind individuals, and disabled people were added.

Travis: It's also important to note during this time, like, white flight became a big issue where these neighborhoods and homes and apartments that you listed, where people had been for multigenerations, right? Now we have people of color who are able to obtain wealth because of growing equality, which still continues to need to grow. But they were now able to obtain wealth in a way that they were able to move into these neighborhoods. And now you had more and more push towards the suburbs where people were like, "Uhh, okay, great!" Because of systemic racism,

right? So then you had more of a spread of these homes, right? Especially at the time when suburbs were, um, you know, more land, and big. And it was like, "Move out here!"

And so you had another of those breaking up of families who had lived in those neighborhoods for so long, because of white flight.

Teresa: Breaking up the families also starts with the social security, right? Because now that you have a steady income, even if it's small, you can afford to move to say, like, a nursing home, right? And have caregivers who are not your family.

And in 1974, women were finally allowed to open their own bank accounts without the consent of their husbands.

Travis: '74?! '74—it's that late?!

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: I never would've guessed that.

Teresa: Now, and this is like wealthy—

Travis: I would've said, like, '50s, '60s.

Teresa: Again, wealthy white women. Because people of color were still kept from opening bank accounts and things like that, right? Um, and it became much easier to get divorced. Something called no-fault divorce became very popular, right? Um, I'm not exactly sure when no-fault divorce started. But we do start to see a skyrocket, because of the idea that you can open your own bank account, right?

Travis: Now you have your own money.

Teresa: You could get divorced before this, right? But now you have a way of keeping your own money.

Travis: And no-fault divorce—forgive me, I think—does it mean, like, you don't need to prove that there is some reason?

Teresa: Right.

Travis: You can just say like, "I would like a divorce," right?

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: And you get the divorce, right? You don't need to, like, justify it to a court of law?

Teresa: Exactly.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Yeah. Um, and so, people's ability to "make their own way"—I'm using quotes—in the world, skyrocketed. Right?

Travis: I also have to imagine that, you know, as we were improving on medicine and improving on our ability to take care of people over a certain age, right? Now life, you know, expectancy gets a little bit longer. People are able to be independent longer after retirement age, right? So you would retire, and have to, like, move back home with your kids right away because you're like, "Okay, well, I still feel healthy enough to take care of myself and live at my own place." And so you had kind of a spreading out—

Teresa: And with social security you had money coming in every month. Um, and also, this is the time in the United States of wage increase. Um, and so—

Travis: Hmm, miss that.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Let's get back into that, folks.

Teresa: So the middle class grew, and children of the new families began to be fed this dream of going away to college, right? And so college money needed to be made. And they left the home for a period of time.

Travis: Not just fed this idea of going away to college, but college becoming, like, the benchmark, the standard of like, "Well, every—everyone goes to college. You have to go to college. What are you gonna do, not go to college and not get a job?" Like, that becoming a thing.

Teresa: Right. And so it was hard for people to go away to college and then experience this freedom, and being told that "You're independent now!" And then having to come back home, right? And this was reiterated in television.

So we see a stark contrast between especially sitcoms of pre-this era, after, and after this era. Because think about Beverly Hillbillies, think about the Munsters, the Addams Family, Andy Griffith Show.

Travis: All sharing a home, yeah.

Teresa: All of these relatives sharing a home, right? And many of them featured grandparents, and aunts and uncles and, you know, that wacky aunt or whatever, right?

But in the '70s, sitcoms began to pivot away from the larger family unit, and judge the people who were coming back to the home, right?

Travis: Yeah, oh, that's true! It started to be like, "Oh, I guess they could make it out there."

Teresa: Exactly.

Travis: Or like, "When are you gonna get a job and move out?" Okay.

Teresa: Exactly. And so, you know—

Travis: I also think at that point—and this is just anecdotal 'cause I haven't looked it up—but it feels to me like that would be the time when there would start being more shows about young people out on their own.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: Young people, like, making it in the city, and living, and working, and dating. And not just like, here's a family, you know, together, and the hijinks are all family-based. That it's more of, like, your Mary Tyler Moore Shows and stuff like that where it's just like—

Teresa: Laverne and Shirley.

Travis: Young women, out on the city, making it on their own kind of deal.

Teresa: Yes. Um, and so not only was that reflected in media, by the 1980s we have this ideal of hyper-independence and materialism that is pervasive in media, right? The idea that you get the biggest and the best. That, you know, you own this huge home, that you're a mover and a shaker, up by your bootstraps, all that kind of stuff.

Travis: Don't shake yourself by your bootstraps. You're gonna end up flipped upside down somehow. All your pocket change falling out.

Teresa: [laughs] And this is when we see the introduction in sitcoms of the loser who lives in their Mom's basement.

Travis: Uh-huh. Like That '70s Show.

Teresa: Like That '70s Show.

Travis: But—which wasn't in the '70s, but you get it.

Teresa: Right, it was in the '90s. 2000s. Right?

Travis: Yeah?

Teresa: 2000s.

Travis: No, '90s. Nah, way '90s.

Teresa: No, the early 2000s!

Travis: It's all the same.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: It's all a big blur, really.

Teresa: Okay. One could make the argument—

Travis: And I'd love to hear that argument. But first, how about a word from another Max Fun show?

[theme music plays]

[Star Trek comm noise]

[music plays]

Speaker 1: Hey! Do you have a favorite episode of Star Trek?

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[Star Trek comm noise]

[music and ad end]

Griffin: From the twisted minds that brought you The Adventure Zone: Balance, and Amnesty, and Graduation, and Ethersea, and Steeplechase, and Outre Space, and all the other ones, the McElroy brothers and Dad are proud to reveal a bold vision for the future of actual play podcasting.

It's, um... it's called The Adventure Zone Versus Dracula?

[music plays]

Justin: Yeah, we're gonna kill Dracula's a—[crow caw].

Travis: Well, we're gonna attempt—we haven't recorded all of it yet. We will attempt to kill Dracula's a—[crow caw].

Justin: The Adventure Zone Versus Dracula.

Griffin: Yes. A season I will be running using the D&D 5th Edition rule set, and there's two episodes out for you to listen to right now! We hope you will join us. Same bat time, same bat channel, for more fun.

Clint: Bats. I see what you did there.

[music and ad end]

Travis: Okay. Time to make your argument.

Teresa: That these things are objectively good. Seen on their own, women having bank accounts, great idea. Social security, great idea. Welfare, great idea. It was possible for people to take care of themselves if they were disabled or lacking resources. Plus, living with your family is not always an option. Maybe you have a toxic—

Travis: Yeah, and not always good, yeah, man. Like, yeah.

Teresa: Yeah, maybe you have a toxic family, and you absolutely deserve to escape them. Right?

Travis: But I'm gonna bet that the problem is capitalism?

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: Where it became not only—like, yeah, you have the choice to do whatever you want. But you don't wanna be a loser, do you?

Teresa: Right.

Travis: Right? You don't wanna be shunned by society, do you?

Teresa: It's the stigma. It's the stigma now. And here's the thing—

Travis: Because one makes more money and one doesn't, yeah.

Teresa: Here's the thing. The economic climate of the United States today makes it virtually impossible for an 18-year-old to walk into a well-paying job right after high school graduation. Um, and so even college graduates with higher educational accolades are finding it impossible to find jobs in their field.

So you have jobs that help them make a little money, right? But then it's not working towards their career that they've spent so much money trying to get to, right? The higher education. And so there's just not enough to go around for most people. Um, and then you also have skyrocketing medical costs, and food costs.

And people can't seem to afford or have the resources that they need to take care of themselves anymore. So—

Travis: Well, and not only that. I mean, you're also dealing with credit score stuff where, like, when you're a young person—you see these videos

now where like, "If you want to make sure that your kid can get a thing when they're 18, get 'em a credit card when they're born, and make—"

And it's like, what are you talking about?

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: And, like, that kind of thing. And not to mention, now also the thing is like, buying up what would be a starter home for people who could afford it, and then, like, flipping it to try to make money off of it, right? So what would be called a fixer-upper, people buying that and, like, owning nine properties in a city, right? Or in a neighborhood even. Where then they are spending money to make that, uh—to improve it, and then sell it for a profit. So you took what would be a fixer-upper starter home, and now you've priced it out of that person's—out of their, you know, what they could pay.

Teresa: Exactly.

Travis: Budget is what I was looking for. The word "budget," yes.

Teresa: So post 2008 housing crisis, starting with the 2010s, right? Multigenerational families that everyone has kind of worked so hard to shake here in the United States is turning out to be the only way that people can afford to live comfortable lives.

Um, and so when you add in the pandemic of 2020—

Travis: The what?

Teresa: the ongoing pandemic. [laughs quietly]

Travis: This is the first I'm hearing about this. What?

Teresa: Um, it started to become... I mean, in fact, statistically normal for people to move back in with their parents, into their family homes.

Travis: And I mean, I'll tell you this right now. If you ask Bebe, our seven-year-old, she's never leaving.

Teresa: That's what she says.

Travis: Yeah. We asked her like, you know, where do you wanna go? Where do you wanna—

And she was like, "I'm gonna live right here. I'm gonna live in this house."

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: And I'm like, "Okay, that's fine. Maybe we could built you, like, a little—like, a tiny house in the backyard." And she's like, "No. I'm gonna stay in my room. I'm gonna live right here."

And it's like, yeah, man. When I think about it from your point of view, you don't have to pay for anything right now. Yeah, it sounds pretty great for you. Yeah, man. Cool, cool, cool.

Teresa: Yeah. We'll go through what that might actually look like in a second. There's a couple of polls I want to talk about. There's a poll published this year by the National Association of Home Builders that as many as one fifth of adults aged 25 to 34 currently live with their parents or parents-in-law.

Travis: How many?

Teresa: One fifth.

Travis: One fifth, okay.

Teresa: And that number is actually very low, since the pandemic, right? Uh, other numbers say—other polls, excuse me—say that up to 45% of people between 18 and 29 live in their childhood homes with their parents.

Travis: Hmm.

Teresa: I mean... if so many people are continuing to live, now, in the multigenerational household, why is it still seen as such a bad thing?

Travis: Especially, man, I'll tell you this. Um, when it is posed as "Oh, but then you're gonna start a family and have kids of your own."

Man, the idea of having grandparents or aunts or uncles or whatever living in the home and being able to say like, "Okay, cool. Can you guys, like, hang out—you know, watch the kids, hang out with the kids while we go to work? While we go do these things?" It's like a built-in, you know, takes a village kind of deal. Of—it is beneficial to have a multigenerational home when kids are in the picture, right? The idea of like, well, you gotta go out and make it on your own and stuff is, once again, just a thing.

And frankly, combining—I'm about to go on a two minute rant.

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: But combining housing costs and, as you mentioned, the pandemic, and a lot of people were, like, working remotely, or switching to online jobs, the stigma of like, "Well, that's just someone who lives at home and just sits on their computer all day in their parents' basement," that stigma's gotta go. Right? Because the idea of like, yeah, man. Like, there are people who—I'm one of 'em. Who makes a living sitting at my computer and working online all the time. And there are people who play e-sports professionally.

Teresa: Right.

Travis: Right? So that idea of like, "They just sit around playing video games."

Like, yeah, man. There's Twitch streams. There's YouTube content. There's people who do it professionally. All of these things. And the idea of having media and, you know, capitalism tell us like, "Well, that person's a loser."

It's like, no. That's not really how that works anymore, and maybe never did. So we really gotta let go of that image.

Teresa: Um, Kitty Grady, who is the author of an article titled "Why Is There So Much Stigma Attached to Moving Back in With Your Parents?" talks

about how we need to start reframing it as the response to a situation and not a personal failing, right? There are just so many people who have moved home that it doesn't represent—it's not representative, statistically, of a personal problem, right? It is a system-ic—systemic one. There it is. That is systemic.

Travis: Well, I would also say, once again, this is anecdotal but, uh—and I'm perfectly happy to be proven wrong. But don't, like, message me about or anything, you know?

Teresa: [snorts]

Travis: Just, like, if time proves me wrong.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: But I would also be willing to bet that removing the stigma of, like, you moved somewhere, it didn't work out, and you came back, would improve a lot—not a lot, but we would see a statistical improvement in things like, you know, unhoused people. Of like, this idea of like, being willing to come home and not feel like a failure.

I'm not saying that that is a large portion of—whatever. But you get it. This idea of, like, people being unhappy at the very least in cities where they moved to because they wanted to make something happen, and then that thing doesn't happen. And that feeling of like, well, I've got to, like, figure out a way to make existence here work because if I go home, everyone's gonna think I'm a failure 'cause, like, I moved to this bigger city or whatever, and it didn't work out.

Right?

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: That isn't healthy for a lot of reasons. The things that that can lead to, at the very least, just unhappiness. And being able—I remember being a kid, right? And people moving—you know, people who did theater or whatever moving from Huntington to, like, New York or Chicago or wherever,

and then coming back. And all the, like, behind the hand whispers about like, "Oh, they couldn't make it."

Like, yeah. Statistically, most people won't.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: And so the idea of, like, letting go of this idea of like, "Oh, but they came back. What a failure." It's like... well, stati—like, most people aren't gonna move to LA and become movie stars. So why not be like, "Yeah, go do it. I fully support you. And if you feel at any point ready to come home, I fully support you in that, too. Go for it."

Teresa: Dr. Karen Gail Lewis, who is a family and sibling therapist based in New York, wants to remind people that United States and UK are an anomaly within the world. Pushing this hyper-independence down our throats. And so in countless cultures around the world, children live with their parents well into adulthood, usually leaving when they get married, but not always.

Um, and speaking to the kind of, like, support that you might need, lots of people find it restorative to their relationships to move home. Because when—maybe when you leave, you're a child and you have one dynamic. And then when you come back, you have the chance to kind of emotionally clean up and redefine your relationship as adults. And so it does—people do find support and healing in doing it. Like, if I always maintained the relationship with my parents that I had when I was a child, I might find that kind of, like...

Travis: Infantilizing?

Teresa: Infantilizing.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Exactly. But now that I know them as adults, and I am an adult, I feel differently about our current relationship.

Travis: Yeah. Not that Dad and I had issues, but I love being friends with my dad, right? The way that we hang out now—it's one of my regrets of my mom passing away when I was 21. Is the inability to—like, we got a couple years in there. But the inability to, like, be friends with my mom as adults, right? And I think that that—and, you know, I had the benefit of, like, going to college for four years and then coming back, right? So that appreciation of being separate. But I can definitely see where spending time with your family as an adult can change that dynamic in whatever way you want. You know, you feel more confident and you feel more able than I were when you were 12, to say what you need and set boundaries and all that stuff.

Teresa: Psychologist John Bowlby refers to this as the dependency paradox. So that if we feel that we have a strong and secure base relationship, we're more likely to live lives of greater autonomy, right? Because we know we'll be safe no matter what happens.

So you feel better about yourself, you feel like you are capable of more things, and that you have those—that ability to set the boundaries because you have a strong and secure base relationship.

Travis: There you go.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: So do you got some, uh, rules, etiquette, advice, that kind of thing for this situation?

Teresa: I sure do.

Travis: Let's get into it.

Teresa: Um, let's take it from the child perspective, right? Um, you—

Travis: The offspring.

Teresa: The offspring.

Travis: The spawn.

Teresa: You should try and downsize as much as you can before you come, because your parents probably already have a house full of furniture. I mean, there's—I mean, you could obviously pay for storage.

Travis: And vice versa, I would say. If you have parents moving in with you, right?

Teresa: Right. Ask them to downsize as much, right? Um, it's hard to meld the households that way if there's no room to meld anything, right?

Travis: And there's always storage units, you know. You know, the idea if you're like—

Teresa: [simultaneously] Yeah, that's what I said, yeah.

Travis: If you're like, I'm doing this for, like, four or five years or whatever, or I don't plan—I love these things. I don't wanna get rid of 'em. There's a lot of reasonably priced storage units, that kind of thing you can do.

Teresa: Yeah. Um, as an adult now, you are expected to contribute to the household.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: It's not chores. They're responsibilities, right? So, um, if you cook dinner, that means that you clean up after yourself. You take out the trash. You use the bathroom, the clean the bathroom. Right? You need to start thinking of your parents as roommates, and you cohabitating all together.

Um, make sure that you show gratitude, right? And you can do this in other ways than just saying "Thanks for havin' me," right?

Travis: "High five, Dad!"

Teresa: "High five!"

Travis: "Nice. Thanks, Pops!"

Teresa: You can cook dinner, right? Or, um, you can help with chores that maybe don't affect you directly. Clean out the garage, organize a closet, things like that. Um, and so that shows parents that you appreciate them making room for you. Maybe when you most needed it.

Travis: I would also highly recommend, um—and this is no matter who you're moving in with, what the living situation is—uh, negotiating and discussing things beforehand.

Teresa: Absolutely.

Travis: Um, and saying like, "Hey. I'm moving in. I would like to be able to help with bills," for example. Or "I would like to contribute to, like, grocery costs." Right? So that way as you go into the situation, everybody has the same expectations for it.

As opposed to somebody just like, hoping that you'll contribute, or you thinking like, "And food is on the house!" Or whatever. Right?

Teresa: Yeah. I had friends during college that lived at home, and that was the expectation for them. Their, quote, "rent" was they paid for food. So they shared the responsibility of cooking and cleaning and stuff, but they paid for food, and their parents took that as rent.

Travis: Right.

Teresa: Um, but you also should try and spend a few times, special times with your parents. It can be kind of a ships passing in the night thing, right? Where you might have different schedules or maybe you really appreciate your friend group or whatever. But make special time to hang out with your parents.

Travis: Don't treat 'em like landlords.

Teresa: Um, you know, even if it's just watching Jeopardy or whatever, right?

Travis: I'd love to watch Jeopardy.

Teresa: Oh. [laughs] Um, but you do need to be mindful of your mental health, right? Being back in your parents' house can be triggering in some ways, even if your parents were wonderful, right? Um, so make sure you have an outside source such as a therapist or a confidant that you can talk to, and get things off of your chest, right?

Travis: This is another important thing when we talk about, like, setting expectations. It's not just financial, right? Like, say you went to college when you were 18 or whatever and you're 22 and you're moving back. You need to be like, "Listen. Curfew is not a thing. But I will be respectful of, like, coming in and waking you guys up in the middle of the night, or if I'm gonna be gone overnight I'll let you know."

That kind of thing.

Teresa: Right. Or if I want to have people over I'll discuss that with you beforehand. No, like, surprises.

Travis: But once again, that idea of like, you don't wanna move home thinking "And have all the independence I did when I was away at college."

While they're thinking like, "Our baby's back!"

Right? You want to have that set as the expectation. Like, "Thank you so much for opening your home to me, but I do want you to know, like, I'm not a child anymore, and this is what I would like—this is how I will be operating within my own independence within the home."

Teresa: And then for the parent, right? Um, make sure that your child—your offspring—has a reasonable amount of privacy, right? There are definitely going to be shared spaces, but everyone needs a place where they can decompress away from everybody, right? So no cleaning or entering without permission.

Some people even make the rule that "I don't even want you to knock on my door. If my door is closed, I am unavailable."

Travis: Yeah. Once again, boundaries and expectations.

Teresa: Also, as parents, you need to remember that things are different now from when you were growing up. And maybe there was affordable housing, and so you could buy it, but there isn't any now. And so your child is not a punchline, right? We've discussed that there's a lot of stigma that can be wrapped around this. But, you know, chances are that it's hard on your child as well.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: They came back because they feel safe here, and you should prove that they are by not infantilizing their situation.

Travis: I also think along those lines, it is important to know that there is that stigma. So even if in your mind you're like, "I'm gonna ask a simple question, like are you working on getting a job?" Right? That to you might just be a question you want to ask them. Um, but for them, right? That might be something that they are defensive about. That they're like, "Yeah, I am trying." Right?

And it's like, you need to understand that this person who has moved back into your home has all of this weight of stigma from the world, that even if you are being very cool and chill about it, and their defensiveness about it, their bristling at questions about, like, what their plans are and all that stuff, is not necessarily focused at you.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: Right? It's just something you might want to be aware of and a little more gentle about.

Teresa: And so that's why I would recommend having that kind of expectations meeting ahead of time before things start to get to that point, right? So if as a parent one of your expectations is that they do get a job, or that they do so many, like, applications or week, or whatever it is, right?

Saying that calmly, assertively, out loud, without pestering, letting everybody know that those are the expectations is a way to avoid that. Right?

Um, and so the boundaries need to be set on both sides. The expectations need to be all laid out on the table. Because you are all adults now.

Travis: Now, speaking of boundaries, we've reached the end of the episode.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Thank you so much—

Teresa: That's not how a b—how a [crosstalk].

Travis: No, it's a boundary! Yeah, if it's out of bounds, right? I'm more talking about, like, bounds of, like, a... pod—I assume—so there's different—words can have different meanings.

Teresa: [laughs] Okay.

Travis: And this is a boundary like the beginning and end. Like a book?

Teresa: Okay, got it. Got it.

Travis: Okay. Okay. Alright.

Teresa: Alright.

Travis: Thank you to our editor, Rachel, without whom we could not make this show. Thank you to our researcher, Alexx, without whom we could not make this show. Thank you to you for listening. I don't wanna make this show without you, and you can't make me. So there.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Um, we also want to say go check out mcelroymerch.com for all the McElroy Merch, dot com.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: And you can go to bit.ly/mcelroytours to see all of our appearances and shows and all that stuff coming up. What else, Teresa?

Teresa: We always thank Brent "brentalfloss" Black for writing our theme music, which is available as a ringtone where those are found. Also, thank you to Bruja Betty Pinup Photography for the cover picture of our fan-run Facebook group, Shmanners Fanners. If you love to give and get excellent advice from other fans, go ahead and join that group today.

And we mentioned at the beginning that we are always taking topic suggestions, and idioms, and questions, and all sorts of things. Send those to shmannerscast@gmail.com. Say hi to Alexx, 'cause she reads every one.

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

Teresa: No RSVP required!

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

Teresa: Manners, Shmanners. Get it?

[theme music plays]

[chord]

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