

Shmanners 406: Job Quitting

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[theme music plays]

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

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

Travis: And you're listening to *Shmanners*.

Teresa: It's extraordinary etiquette.

Travis: For ordinary occasions. Hello, my dove.

Teresa: Hello dear.

Travis: How are you?

Teresa: Well, how are you?

Travis: Okay wait, was that, "You're doing well?" or— 'Cause it sounded like you were saying [sarcastically] "Well, how are you?"

Teresa: Both.

Travis: Okay. Cool, I'm havin' a great time.

Teresa: Okay, good.

Travis: I went and was dropping kids off, listened to a lot of Guns 'n' Roses on the way home, for some reason.

Teresa: [chuckles]

Travis: It just clicked.

Teresa: Interesting choice.

Travis: Yeah, I don't know why. I don't know why.

Teresa: Guns 'n' Roses, *Roll For Sandwich* shirt, you know.

Travis: I'm havin' a great day.

Teresa: You're havin' a great day.

Travis: Hello. What are we talkin' about this week?

Teresa: Today.

Travis: Mm-hmm?

Teresa: We are talking about... the *Shmanners* of quitting your job.

Travis: Awwww yeah! Scorched earth!

Teresa: [giggles]

Travis: Tell everybody, "Aw, get out of here. I've never liked you, Janice. Doug, you can keep this job. Ha ha! Bye!"

Teresa: This is where you insert anecdote about you quitting a job, 'cause I don't think I've ever quit a job.

Travis: I've quit a lot of jobs.

Teresa: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm.

Travis: And I've been fired from a lot of jobs.

Teresa: I don't think I've ever been fired either.

Travis: I've been begged to stay.

Teresa: Mm!

Travis: At jobs.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: Which is so interesting. The rollercoaster of people liking the work I do.

Teresa: [laughs] Really up and down.

Travis: Yeah, where I had one manager, I got fired from a coffee shop that I won't name, but it's not a chain or anything, but because they didn't like my work ethic.

Teresa: Uh-huh, 'cause you did everything you were supposed to do with—

Travis: I did— Let me tell it! Hold on.

Teresa: I know, but.

Travis: Let—

Teresa: I— Okay. Sorry.

Travis: You interrupted the punchline!

Teresa: Sorry, sorry, sorry, sorry.

Travis: [sighs] I got fired from a job, they didn't like my work ethic because I was doing everything on the to-do list. And they were like, "And then we want you to find more stuff to do." And I was like, "Okay, like what?" and they were like, "Well you have to find it." Like it was a magic eye poster. And I was like, "No, just—"

Teresa: How many pieces of flare were you supposed to wear to this job?

Travis: Yeah, I was like, "But I'm doing everything you asked me to do?" and they were like, "Yes," and I was like, "Okay. And if you ask me to do more stuff, I'll do it," and it was like, "Oh, but we don't wanna have to ask."

I was like, "But how am I supposed to know what to do if you don't tell me?" And then another job, when I worked in the Land's End department of Sears and I left there to become a manager at Pet Smart, and later a dog trainer at Pet Smart.

When I left there, my boss in the Land's End department begged me to stay, and said "Well, can't you work both jobs?" I said "No, there's too much travel time," and she said "Okay, well what if you just work like one day a week?" and I was like, "No, I'm not gonna do that."

And she was like, "Okay, like one day every two weeks? Or like one day a month?" I was like, "No, I'm not gonna do that," and she was like, "What if we just keep you on the schedule, and whenever you wanna work, you just let us know and you can come in?"

And I have no idea why because when I took that job, I told them straight up, I was like, "Well, I have a lot of retail experience, I worked at Best Buy for many years, but I'm not looking to advance. I don't want raises, I just want to be base level employee," and they were like, "Awesome." Then they offered me promotions several times.

Teresa: [giggles]

Travis: And I wouldn't say I phoned that job in, but I think it was like I was one of the few people there that was good at and enjoyed talking to customers.

Teresa: Oh yeah.

Travis: And they were like, "Please! Don't go!"

Teresa: [chuckles]

Travis: "Then we'll have to talk to customers!"

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: But that's just one of the many jobs I've quit.

Teresa: For all my jobs, I've always just advanced.

Travis: Now.

Teresa: Or just the contract ends, right? So like as an actor, you sign on for a show or a season or whatever, right?

Travis: But— Well, I mean you stopped being lifeguard and swim instructor.

Teresa: Yeah, when I got to the very top. And then we moved.

Travis: Okay, but that's still quitting.

Teresa: I mean I guess so.

Travis: You had a job, and by your own choice—

Teresa: I consider that—

Travis: — stopped having a job.

Teresa: — retiring. [laughs]

Travis: Baby, that's a different thing.

Teresa: No. One does not stay a lifeguard forever.

Travis: Yeah, but you quit being a lifeguard. You didn't retire.

Teresa: No, I think I retired.

Travis: You didn't retire.

Teresa: They threw me a party, I'm pretty sure I retired.

Travis: Oh my god, okay, retiring.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Is a thing you do at a certain age when you're not allowed to work that job anymore.

Teresa: Well. Most lifeguards are teenagers.

Travis: Okay, my— You can call it whatever you want, you quit that job.

Teresa: [giggles]

Travis: You're in denial.

Teresa: I'm pretty sure I retired.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: I never lifeguarded ever again.

Travis: Oh, so they like lifted your swimsuit into the rafters as—

Teresa: I think so.

Travis: You're saying "retired" like a basketball player might stop in their prime.

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: [sighs] Okay.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: She went out on top. Best in the game, GOAT.

Teresa: Listen, when I left that job, by retiring at the top, there was a month where I did 98 swim lessons.

Travis: I— Listen, I remember.

Teresa: In one month.

Travis: I remember.

Teresa: It's a lot.

Travis: And now you won't— now you don't swim unless it's for fun, to teach our kids.

Teresa: Yeah, but they don't listen.

Travis: One of 'em does!

Teresa: A little.

Travis: Yeah. We won't say which one.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: It's Bebe.

Teresa: It's Bebe. [laughs]

Travis: Bebe is a great swimmer, Dot's like, "I don't need an—" Dot is too much— We'll get to quitting, I promise. But Dot, like myself, given the opportunity to say enter the ocean, enter the water, do anything, Dot would much rather sit down and not.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: So just like me, love it.

Teresa: She's also very happy to just let me hold her.

Travis: Yeah, it's fine.

Teresa: She doesn't want any kind of independence.

Travis: Me too! Okay, so.

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: But this isn't what we're talking about, we're talking about quitting jobs.

Teresa: So first let's talk about the history of jobs in general, so we have a good kind of like outline. Because the way that we think about jobs hasn't really been along that long.

Travis: No, not until it was invented by Steve Jobs.

Teresa: Mmmmm...

Travis: And he said, "I have an idea for a different way to work."

Teresa: Mmmm. For most of history, people worked in trades, passed down through generations, right? As apprentices and things like that.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: And I mean even if it wasn't in your family, you could find someone to teach you the trade and you would apprentice underneath them, and then it would be like inherited to you.

Travis: And that was like the dream, it was really exciting, you know, if you weren't from like a rich family or nobility or whatever, and you were able to like land your son an apprenticeship with like a, you know, a print maker or silversmith or something. It's like, "Okay, great."

Teresa: Right. Yeah.

Travis: "They're established." It was the equivalent of what I think people maybe not so much today, but thought about like getting their kid into a good school.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: Like, "Ugh, now I don't have to worry about them anymore."

Teresa: That's right. Or you were a farmer.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: A lot of people didn't really—

Travis: Or you were rich.

Teresa: Or you were rich, I guess, yeah.

Travis: Yeah, there were three options.

Teresa: There were three options. But you didn't really decide one day that you didn't want to be a farmer anymore.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Because you probably wouldn't survive the winter, right?

Travis: This is a thing that I— we see a lot, you know, in children's movies especially that is such an outdated concept, right? But it's the kid going to the parent and being like, "I don't want to do what you do anymore. I'm not gonna grow up to be a farmer, I'm not gonna grow up to be, I don't know, whatever. A coalminer, I'm not gonna grow up to be fill in the blank."

Teresa: And what they never show in those movies or whatever is like the parents being like, "Well, I guess I have to keep doing this until I die."

Travis: Yeah, or the parents being like, "So what else are you gonna do? It's not like people are hiring."

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: "You're gonna go around and hand out some kind of piece of paper that says your skillset, and what you've done before? That's ridiculous."

Teresa: [laughs] Cue the Industrial Revolution.

Travis: Mmm.

Teresa: So, this era made changes in business, work, family life, society as a whole. So in Great Britain, around 1750, this is when the population starts to boom.

Over the next hundred years, the population of England alone would triple from 5.7 million to 16.7 million people. So farmers did increase food production to feed the larger population, but there's really only so much that a person can do by hand, right?

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: So machines were necessary, they were needed, to take the place of these farmers so that they could make enough food to feed everyone, right?

Travis: It's a thing like we think a lot nowadays, especially— I mean since the Industrial Revolution, the conversation of like machines taking jobs.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: Has always been a thing, but it's that ouroboros, you know, the snake eating its own tail of "Yeah but population started to increase so demand increased beyond the ability for one— So in order for us to keep advancing, we had to do this and this and this, right."

Teresa: Right, but then you have those machines, and suddenly you don't need so many people, right?

So you have the machines, like you said, to do the work, but then you don't need the people to do the work so much because the machines are doing it. And as technology increases, you don't need all those people, right? And soooo, what was a out-of-work farmhand to do?

Travis: Well, the other side of the Industrial Revolution was you started to have things like assembly lines.

Teresa: Mm-hmm, exactly.

Travis: And stuff like that, so in— So imagine this, right? Up 'til now, say a blacksmith, you know, who wanted to make tools, right? In order to do that, you had to like spend years training with somebody to become a master at it, so that you could make those tools, so you would apprentice, and then you would do it, right?

So if you hadn't spent years learning to do it, you couldn't just start doing it. Cut to the Industrial Revolution, where you start to have, you know, like these molds made that your— have machines that melt the metal.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: Pour the metal into a form, instead of having to make everything by hand. Now you don't have to have years of training to do it, you need about like maybe a day of training to be like, "And when this is ready, turn this lever, and it dumps in. And then do that 5000 times a day."

Teresa: Sure, sure, sure. There's another piece of this puzzle, right.

Travis: The corner piece.

Teresa: That— [chuckles] That moved people to the cities. Traditionally, villages had swathes of public land.

Travis: Oh.

Teresa: That was meant to be used by everyone, for— maybe for farming, for grazing, for building. Like you— there wasn't this same concept of ownership that we have now before the Industrial Revolution, but... Rich people started buying up parcels of land, right. And fencing it.

Travis: Ugh, rich people.

Teresa: And policing it, and keeping people out, right? So that they could have— so that the elite could do their hunting or whatever it is. Or lease it back to farmers, so not only are you collecting rent from the farmers, you're probably also collecting the food.

Or a portion of the food, of course, right? And so that's not only like one of the things that happened while people were leaving, it was also kind of like the reason that people left.

Travis: Mm.

Teresa: Villages for the cities. So you're—

Travis: Well and—

Teresa: There's a lot of different things converging all in like the way of life that we used to have we can't support anymore, not only because there's too many people in the cities, but also we're all moving to the cities.

Travis: And I'm not a historian, in many ways.

Teresa: [chuckles]

Travis: I've lived through the past some of it, but.

Teresa: [chuckles]

Travis: The— I imagine that there was once again another catch 22 of the more people move to the cities, the more cities needed money for infrastructure to support those people, the more rich people could buy up stuff.

Teresa: Yup.

Travis: Because it was like, "Well. You gotta sell this land that was, you know, a park or whatever for— 'Cause this person wants to build a factory there. And that sucks, but we need the money to build a new hospital, because there's a million more people living in the city."

Teresa: Some— Certainly. I mean all of that makes sense to me. In 1800, only one in five Brits lived in a city. By the middle of the 19th century, half of all Britains lived in a city.

Travis: So within 50 years.

Teresa: Yeah. [pause] No. So— Yeah, by the middle of the 19th, yeah. Within 50 years. That's like a generation, right? And so several other European nations, including France and the Netherlands and Germany, all saw this boom in their urban populations.

[sighs] It wasn't great, right? We've talked about a couple of the ways that people were kind of like forced to change their lifestyles, but also you know health and safety—

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: — aspects were pretty poor.

Travis: Hadn't figured out quite like sewerage and water treatment.

Teresa: Not only that, but like the factories were abysmal.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: There were coal mines and workplaces that people worked in long hours and miserable conditions, separated from their families, things like that, right?

Travis: Man, it really starts to illustrate— 'Cause I'm sure on the East Coast of the United States a lot of this was happening too, right?

When you think about like New York and stuff like that, but even then we were talking about the Grand Tour, like this like idea of like cowboys and stuff. And you start to really understand why that became such a fantasy. Of like, "Oh, to be out on the wild open spaces."

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: Right? "Oh, just look and see nothing but land, lots of land, and starry skies above."

Teresa: [chuckles]

Travis: "Don't fence me in."

Teresa: So suddenly we get the concept of quitting. Although, you can't—you probably really can't quit, because if you don't work you'll die. But... the idea of quiet quitting at least is centuries old. So people would get rebellious against these long hours and miserable conditions, right? So some people, there are accounts of people working slowly on purpose.

Travis: Mm-hmm.

Teresa: Doing just the bare minimum for their rate of production. And so like... there's the idea like you would strike, right? That's another way to halt the business and get better conditions without having to quit.

Travis: Mm-hmm. Invented by the Newsies.

Teresa: Of course. No. [chuckles] So you would completely shut production down in a city, because these factories were often— There wasn't a lot of competition, right?

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: There was like maybe one or two, but if you got everyone to agree that we're just gonna do it this way. You didn't have like the long-haul shipping that we do today, and so there wasn't a lot of like outside forces keeping you from doing this. Or other people would purposely break the machines.

Travis: Mm.

Teresa: So the factories would have to shut down to repair, right? It's not like... These factories relied so much on each machine doing one or two things right, this assembly line technique, where if one of the pieces "accidentally"—

Travis: Got smashed up by a baseball bat?

Teresa: — got smashed up by a baseball bat, cricket bat.

Travis: Probably.

Teresa: Then it would put a halt through the whole thing. And this is when you could negotiate like wages and hours and things like that, if you were organized enough to do it. And people began to organize. Labor unions that fight for better pay.

Travis: Yaaaay unions.

Teresa: And fight against cruel practices like child labor.

Travis: Booooo.

Teresa: And so like particularly, this time is where like the organization of labor really starts to take off. And that's part of the reason why you can quit your job today.

Travis: Before we go to break, can I tell you about my favorite quitting experience?

Teresa: Yes, please.

Travis: I had already told my boss, when I'd worked at Best Buy, I'd worked there for like two and a half years and I had made it to supervisor in— I was a merchandising supervisor, so we handled putting everything out, unloading the truck, changing the prices.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: You know, moving sales and stuff. And I'd already told them like I'm going to be moving to Cincinnati in like a month, and he was like, "Awesome, sounds great." He was fine with it, he was a cool dude. Then Best Buy announced that they were going to be restructuring like the departments and everything, to go from seven supervisors down to five.

And so managers had to go to their supervisors and say like, "Hey. You can either let us move you down out of the supervisor position into one of the other, you know, like a support position and keep getting paid, you know, the same for like six months and then you're done. Or we can let you go, and you'll get a, you know, severance package."

So my manager came to me and he was like, "Hey," [chuckles] "You're leaving anyways. Let me fire you. You'll get off two weeks earlier, and get a severance package of like at that point like \$40,000."

Teresa: Whaaaaat?

Travis: I was like, "That sounds great. Thank you very much." So that's what happened.

Teresa: That's amazing.

Travis: It was incredible. Be more like the boss.

Teresa: Be like that boss. The final piece in this puzzle, before we go to our break, is the start of the office.

Travis: Mm. Love that show.

Teresa: [chuckles dryly] It all started—

Travis: That didn't seem like a sincere laugh baby, if I'm being honest.

Teresa: [chuckles] With the invention of the typewriter.

Travis: Uh-huh.

Teresa: And paper. Dunder Mifflin.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: They do paper.

Travis: No, paper had been around before that.

Teresa: [chuckles] Right, no. But they do paper, right?

Travis: They do paper, but it wasn't the invention of paper.

Teresa: [chuckles] Paper—

Travis: Do— I don't need this.

Teresa: But the type—

Travis: I'm a professional comedian.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: I won't be patronized by my own wife. No, that's not true. I'm patronized by you all the time.

Teresa: 1868. Christopher Latham Sholes and his colleagues patented what would become the first commercially successful typewriter. And so in the 1870s, they started to manufacture typewriters, and with the rise of this like office management kind of deal, mass white collar workforce began to evolve as we pushed into the 1900s.

Travis: Well because here's— Okay! This is so interesting, and makes complete sense, why this leads directly to quitting. Because if you had a factory job, some place making ball bearings, right? And it's like one, we can teach somebody how to pour the molds and do the things of ball bearings a day.

Right, but also you quit, you're not gonna go work at the factory that makes broom handles, 'cause you know how to make ball bearings, right? So they don't even save time and training. But if you know how to type, one, that's very skilled, right?

Teresa: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

Travis: That's a thing that you can tell the difference of, and like we can train you but either you're fast or not. And you could type at the ball bearing factory in management, in the, you know, the office, or you could type at the broom handle factory in the office. So you could quit that job, start the other one.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: And go straight into it.

Teresa: Next day.

Travis: And listen, I'm not saying that people who work in a factory aren't skilled labor, you understand what I'm saying, from a boss's perspective. Okay, thank you very much. Okay! How about a word from another MaxFun show?

[transition theme music plays]

Biz Ellis: Hi, this is Biz, and this is the final season of *One Bad Mother*, a comedy podcast about parenting. This is going to be a year of celebrating all that makes this podcast and this community magical.

Caller One: I'm so glad that I found your podcast.

Caller Two: I just cannot thank you enough for just being the voice of reason as I'm trying to figure all of this out.

Caller Three: Thank you and cheers to your incredible show, and the vision you had to provide this space for all of us.

Biz Ellis: This is still a show about life after giving life, and yes, there will be swears. You can find us on maximumfun.org. And as always, you are doing a great job.

[school bell rings]

Caroline Roper: Alright class. Tomorrow's exam will cover the science of cosmic rays, the morals of art forgery, and whether or not fish can drown. Any questions? Yes, you in the back.

Speaker One: Uh, what is this?

Caroline Roper: It's the podcast *Let's Learn Everything!*

Tom Lum: Where we learn about science and a bit of everything else. My name's Tom, I studied cognitive and computer science, but I'll also be your teacher for intermediate emojis.

Caroline Roper: My name's Caroline, and I did my masters in biodiversity conservation, and I'll be teaching you intro to things the British Museum stole.

Ella Hubber: My name's Ella, I did a PhD in stem cell biology, so obviously I'll be teaching you the history of fanfiction.

Tom Lum: Class meets every other Thursday on MaximumFun.

Speaker One: So do I still get credit for this?

All: [laugh] No!

Ella Hubber: Obviously not.

Caroline Roper: No,

Tom Lum: It's a podcast.

All: [laugh]

[pause]

Travis: We're back, we didn't quit.

Teresa: We didn't quit.

Travis: We're back.

Teresa: After—

Travis: But we're on the edge! So you guys— [chuckles] No.

Teresa: After the typewriter, we get the cubicle. Furniture seller Herman Miller created the collapsible office space in 1964, with the—

Travis: And the air-on chair.

Teresa: [chuckles]

Travis: I've heard it on a lot of podcasts and NPR.

Teresa: And these original quote "mobile offices," right, were to— supposed to make the working conditions better. Because before this, you had kind of like massive like open— I mean, you would take over like a factory floor, right?

And just have rows and rows of typists. I'm... I'm recalling from the show *Thoroughly Modern Millie*, when they're— all the typists are kind of in the row before they do the "Forget About the Boy" tap dance.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Yeah. Like that. And so these were supposed to give you quote "privacy," right? But it really just turned into a jail cell, right?

Travis: Well that's the— this is the wild thing of like I know enough, just enough, about this kind of stuff psychologically. Of like basically, they failed to take any like human psychology into account, from two different directions.

Teresa: Mm.

Travis: Direction one, closing people off from each other creates a very like negative emotional feeling, right? Whereas being there, being able to smile at each other, see other people, right?

Makes you feel better! Makes you feel not so alone, makes you feel not so like a cog in a machine, right? Then the other side of it being if you can see your employee, you know if they're working or not.

Teresa: Mm.

Travis: And if they're in a cubicle, they just have to make sure they're working when you walk by.

Teresa: Yeah. I mean, there's a very delicate balance that I feel like we teeter on constantly, where like if everyone is out in this like, what do they call it, a bullpen or something, right?

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: And it's like chaos, and you feel like the boss is constantly like breathing down your neck about getting things done, walking the rows or whatever it is. But then you also have like this like rat maze of cubicles that nobody can see each other around.

And then like at this point now we've got to like people who do their jobs remotely sometimes go to like work communities, like a WeWork kind of place. Where like you have the tables and the community, but like the— It just seems to swing to wildly, and we can't find that balance.

Travis: Let me tell you, here's the thing. I'm gonna get up on a little soapbox for a second. [grunts]

Teresa: One second.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: I'm timing you.

Travis: What you're talking about and this idea of like in a bullpen it's chaos, you have a manager breathing down your neck, right? The problem is that takes a good manager, a good boss, good office culture, good job culture, good environment to work.

Cubicles seem like a quick fix that doesn't require management or bosses to do anything different. Right? So the problem is one version to have a good working office, a good business, that is productive and all that stuff, requires management and bosses to do more work.

And the other one devalues and dehumanizes employees to treat them more like a part of a machine, to get them to do more work, not necessarily better, but more work to increase productivity without the bosses and management having to do work.

Right? So that's the difference is what I think they failed to take into account is maybe the problem is me.

Teresa: Mmm.

Travis: Okay, I'm off my soapbox.

Teresa: So, it seems that every invention created to improve work makes it worse.

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: Right? When put in the hands of like big companies.

Travis: 'Cause you need people!

Teresa: People.

Travis: People make businesses better.

Teresa: Telecommuting was introduced in the 1970s, and then the 80s, to make work life more flexible, but it wound up making it extremely difficult to maintain work life balance, right?

Travis: Mm.

Teresa: And your employee could reach you at all times.

Travis: Mm.

Teresa: And so as we move into the 21st century, working conditions change because there's less financial security. There's disappearing retirement plans, skyrocketing education costs, refusal to raise the minimum wage. We've just seen what they say is the end of a great kind of like exodus of jobs.

Travis: Mm-hmm.

Teresa: Where like people are quitting left and right. So... the last touchstone, before we actually talk about how to quit, is the millennial workforce. The concept of working a career changed with millennials, and this is like scientifically backed, I know you're looking at me incredulously.

Travis: No no no! I'm excited! That wasn't incredulous, that was anticipatory.

Teresa: Before, it was customary for a worker to stay at a single company for several years, if not an entire career. But—

Travis: Because you were promised advancement, you were promised— It's a thing that having worked a lot of jobs.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: Is—

Teresa: That the company'll take care of you.

Travis: Well not just that, right. There is a carrot, this bootstrap kind of ideal that America has touted for way too long this idea of the more you give to the company, the better you'll do, right?

Teresa: Hmm.

Travis: And so you'll get this like company and person kind of attitude of "No, I have to— I'm only getting paid 40 hours, but if I work 50. I'm only expected to be here til five, but if I stay til five thirty to get this job done,

I'll be appreciated more, there will be more advancement, I'll get a raise sooner."

You're being promised that you're investing, basically, all this extra work and time and care into more money, that they never actually have to give you 'cause you're already doing the extra work and the extra time and the extra labor.

Teresa: Right. And with millennials they say this is the first time that people actually do not feel that kind of loyalty to a company, they do not feel that people are being taken care of and given the carrots that they've been promised, and so they abandon at better opportunities. Something better comes along right now is worth more than that carrot that they've been dangling for later, right?

Travis: I— For a long time, I don't know if you ever had this in any job or anything, but for a long time, we were told it was like taboo and really bad manners, bad social whatever, to talk about how much money you made.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: And... it—

Teresa: That's exactly what they want you to think.

Travis: Exactly. That's what it turns out is like yeah, that's a great way to underpay an employee if they're not like, "Hey, how much do you pay? Even person in the same office as me, doing the same job, who has been here six months less. How much money do you make? Okay, you make like \$5000 more a year than I do. Whyyyy?" right?

Teresa: Mmmm.

Travis: When you're told like, "Oh, we don't talk about money here or whatever. You'll get in trouble for talking about how much you pay," that's why, right? And I think that as we've seen social media rise in the millennial generation, you see a lot more like, "This is how much, this is how to talk about this thing, this is how to ask these questions."

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: "This is how you should be taken care of."

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: We've made it.

Teresa: Shmanners. We've made it. How. To quit. Your job. Now. The tradition is two weeks' notice. This process became standard protocol in office culture during the mid-20th century, but things have changed.

So check your employee handbook to see if there's a specific amount of notice you should give. Maybe you only need one, or you may have to provide a month or two if your job is highly specialized.

Travis: I will also say this, so outside of... you don't want to jeopardize in any way like... you know, if you need a recommendation, or even into like, "Your health insurance lasts this long after you leave," or something like that, right?

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: But... I also know that there's a lot of times where that feeling of "But you're leaving us in the lurch!" or "How—" Right?

Teresa: We'll talk about that.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: For sure.

Travis: But that idea of like if a circumstance reaches a point where it's like, "I need to quit now."

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: Then so be it.

Teresa: Definitely. This is best case scenario, you love your job, they love you.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Right? But something better comes along, or your family goals have changed. Or you are moving somewhere else to be closer to whatever, right?

Travis: Well yeah, like this happened when I—

Teresa: Your life goals have changed, but there's nothing wrong or toxic about your work environment. That's what I'm talking about first.

Travis: When I left the theatre, right, and it was like, "It's time for me to move on, I'm been here for five years." But the way that like a season, you know, I can't just leave in the middle like, "Good luck."

Teresa: Right.

Travis: And then they don't have somebody building sets for six months.

Teresa: Right.

Travis: So basically I told the boss like, "I'm going to be leaving. I will help the process of like interviewing new candidates until we find one we all think is like a good fit for taking over, and then I'll be done."

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: Right? So like I stayed while we like put out the call and interviewed people and everything. Because there wasn't any like timing of like—

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: — "I need to be done now."

Teresa: You should notify your supervisor. And you can do I personally, but it's also respectful to do a letter, right? Tell them why you're leaving, when, and you know, an official kind of like bid for "How can I make this transition smoother?"

Travis: And if you wanna feel powerful, do a thing where like at like 9:05, pop into their office and say like, "Hey, just come and talk to me before the end of the day."

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: "Oh no, don't worry about it right now, just before—"

Teresa: "Oh no, it's alright."

Travis: "Just before the end of the day I need to talk to you, but not right now. No, I have a bunch of— Just whenever."

Teresa: [chuckles]

Travis: And then make yourself like really scarce until like 4:40.

Teresa: [giggles]

Travis: And then be like, "Oh! Right! Yeah, sorry. I quit." [chuckles]

Teresa: This— That's not what you wanna do for a nice kind of like—

Travis: Sure.

Teresa: — work environment.

Travis: Sure.

Teresa: So... this letter contains a statement of your resignation, the date of your last day, information for the transition. So like where you're going, who you think would be qualified if you want— if you wanna like submit for one of your other like fellow employees to take over, or whatever. Contact information, sincere thanks for the job, right? And this is like I said, if you loved this job and they loved you back.

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: There's a bit of a joke that your last two weeks should be bare minimum effort, right? That you've already quit, and you're just doin' the boss a favor. But—

Travis: It's loose end time, baby.

Teresa: It is good to tie up those loose ends.

Travis: Yup.

Teresa: And it would be... probably better that your boss remembered you, if you want a recommendation from them, remembered you for making sure that everything went well instead of, you know, napping in the conference room or whatever.

Travis: Now, I'll also say this, in writing that letter, I'll give you the same advice that Teresa often gives me when I am communicating something to someone. One, you don't have to over explain.

Teresa: Right.

Travis: You don't— Don't over explain, write those things. And it's also important to note you're not asking for permission to quit, right? They— If you want to quit, they can't be like, "No." [chuckles]

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: "No, you can't quit." I mean, contracts and whatever being what they are, but as long as you're following like whatever rules are in the contract for quitting.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: Like you don't have to— You can make it a statement and not a question.

Teresa: Exactly. Return any company property. Sometimes this is company car stuff, computers, research tools. You do have a little bit of leeway in here because there is an— protection for your intellectual property at a job, and that would all be covered in your contract as well.

What systems you put in place, if those belong to you, if they belong to the company, things like that. Clear out all your personal items, making sure your workspace is clean, things like that.

And you know, if you've had a wonderful experience at your job, be sure to keep your communication around your transition positive, right? And if you feel comfortable, you can even let them know how to contact you if they need you once you've left.

Like I've said, things around like specific systems or whatever that you've put in place, you might need to, if you want to continue this relationship, right?

Even without the work relationship, be available to help out just like over the phone, or shoot 'em a text or an email or whatever. Now, if you find yourself in a toxic work environment... I have this to say. Screw 'em.

Travis: Ooooo!

Teresa: Oh.

Travis: I don't know, is that—

Teresa: [sighs]

Travis: Can we say that?

Teresa: We can say that.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: All of the etiquette we listed is only in reference to that lovely work environment. If your rights are being abused, if it is like— If you feel highly pressured and cruelly used by management to stay in a difficult situation, you don't have to be polite about that, okay? Get out of that bad situation, politeness comes second. I'm not saying to be rude. What I'm saying is—

Travis: Well, what's great is politeness as protection.

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: Of like, "Oh no, I did the thing. I wrote the letter, I followed the rules."

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: "I, you know, I maintained a professional level and you didn't," right? And so like politeness as protection is one of the things we talk about a lot of like, "No, I did the steps in the correct order, I made sure to file the thing, I made sure to tell the person, I made sure to do—," so you have no legal way.

Teresa: Right.

Travis: To do this or this or this, right?

Teresa: Right. So if you need to leave right away, you are welcome to leave right away. Tell your supervisor "I quit. I will not be here tomorrow."

Travis: Like maybe put in your two weeks' notice, and what's that? You have two weeks of vacation time saved up, and you're gonna take that vacation time, right?

Teresa: I mean.

Travis: Power move.

Teresa: You may not get that paid vacation if you say that you're gonna quit.

Travis: Now if you have it and it's legally there, and you've scheduled it and then you turn it in.

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: On a legal legal legal legal.

Teresa: Legal legal legal. Here is a very interesting anecdote. In 2019, a New Zealand man named Josh Thompson got the inkling that his company was about to start laying people off, and he was in that pile. So he decided to follow the layoff kind of protocols, where he is allowed to have an emotional support person with him for a disciplinary meeting, and that was allowed in the company.

He hired a performer named Joe the Clown to act as his emotional support clown in the office on the day of his firing. And so they never specified that he couldn't bring an on-duty clown to support him. So in full makeup, Joe the Clown made balloon animals, and did an entire miming set during Thompson's firing, and he had a new job lined up.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: He didn't need any kind of like reference or anything, which I would say don't bring a clown to your firing if you need a reference and probably won't get one. But—

Travis: That's a weird version of "Don't bring a knife to a gun fight."

Teresa: [chuckles]

Travis: But I really like it.

Teresa: But that's a very specific situation that I applaud.

Travis: Alright, that's gonna do it for us, folks. Thank you so much for listening. Hey, it's a new month, and that means new merch over at the McElroy Merch Store, you can go over to mcelroymerch.com and check that out.

We've got some *My Brother, My Brother And Me* and *Adventure Zones* coming up in Tacoma, Washington. We're also doing Vancouver, but that one's already sold out. So hurry up and get your tickets for the Tacoma shows before that sells out too.

There's some other stuff up there too; bit.ly/mcelroytours. Um... 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 han— fans, go ahead and join that group today.

As always, thank you to Alex, our writer researcher, we couldn't do this show without her. Thank you to Rachel, our editor, also couldn't do the show without her. And thank you to you for listening. If you would love to participate—

Travis: We could do the show without you, but why? I know, I forgot to do it, and I shouldn't give notes.

Travis: If you would like to participate even more in our show, please email us, shmannerstcast@gmail.com, with your subject suggestions, with your questions, with your queries, with your... anecdotes, idioms.

Travis: Say thank you to Alexx!

Teresa: And say thank you to Alexx, because she reads every one.

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

Teresa: No RSVP required.

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

Teresa: Manners, shmanners. Get it?

[theme music plays]

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