

Shmanners 436: Butler Quiz

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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: I'm okay. I had some—

Travis: Great.

Teresa: I had some dental work done this week, and so I'm a little sore, but.

Travis: Are you still getting used to us recording face-to-face instead of side-by-side?

Teresa: Indeed.

Travis: Because I noticed during the intro, you won't make eye contact with me.

Teresa: [chuckles]

Travis: When you're talking. Are you worried that I'll make a silly face, or some sort of humorous joke, and that you won't be able to hold it together?

Teresa: Nope.

Travis: Or do you just not like lookin' at me?

Teresa: No, I like looking at you.

Travis: Oh okay.

Teresa: I just don't like looking at you while I'm speaking.

Travis: Oh okay.

Teresa: I don't think—

Travis: Is that the Catherin O'Hara school of acting?

Teresa: [chuckles] I'm looking at you while you're speaking.

Travis: Yeah. I do appreciate that.

Teresa: Hey, hey, let's not throw stones, Mr. Glass House, you also do this. You're not looking at me either.

Travis: That's because you're just too beautiful, and I'm afraid if I look directly at you, it'll burn out my retinas, like the sun.

Teresa: Whatever.

Travis: You are like an eclipse.

Teresa: Whatever.

Travis: Okay. How was your Thanksgiving?

Teresa: [chuckles] Our Thanksgiving was great, you were there.

Travis: I know.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: I know, that's true. Just trying to achieve some friendly level of banter.

Teresa: Oh, okay.

Travis: Before jumping into what I believe is going to be a quiz.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: That I will almost certainly not do well on.

Teresa: I want you to know that I have not previewed these, because I wanted it to be as much of a quiz for you as it was for me.

Travis: That's marriage, folks. A constant quiz. [chuckles]

Teresa: But we are taking a quiz today from the International Butler Academy.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Which—

Travis: The IBA, of course.

Teresa: Okay. This is for business training, a business etiquette quiz. Now let me read you the introduction.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: "Knowing and understanding etiquette and protocol offers an enormous advantage in today's professional landscape."

Travis: Sure sure sure.

Teresa: "Blah blah blah blah blah. By mastering these unwritten rules and established norms, individuals enhance their career prospects, positioning themselves as reliable and polished assets within their prospective fields, propelling their careers forward." Now from that, would you say that this is kind of like... like a charm school? Like an etiquette kind of course.

Travis: It does sound like— It sounds like kind of I guess a finishing school like thing.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: Of like, "Are you ready to elevate yourself from, I don't know, lower case 'b' butler, to upper case 'B' Butler?" and I bet that one of the like qualifications is you can't giggle when they say, "polished assets."

Teresa: I think so.

Travis: Yeah, you're not allowed to laugh when they say that.

Teresa: But what a— what I'm trying to get it as— get. At. Is. One might think that this is for like the general public, but this school is actually to teach people to be butlers.

Travis: Yeah, to buttle.

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: Is that right?

Teresa: I thought butler's school was just like the name of the thing.

Travis: Oh.

Teresa: But it's actual butler.

Travis: I don't think you would call it the International Butler Association or whatever if it was like, "And my name's Todd Butler."

Teresa: The International Butler Academy.

Travis: Okay, yeah. You would call it "Butler's International Academy," or "Todd Butler's School for Butlers."

Teresa: Well, that's not what I thought at first, so... good for you.

Travis: Well.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: I'm a very literal thinker, everyone says that about me, very locked in, very by the book. Are you gonna quiz me on how to buttle?

Teresa: I am.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Well no, this is not buttling. This quiz is—

Travis: Butlering? Is it butlering?

Teresa: [laughs] Oh no.

Travis: I prefer buttling, but anyways, go on.

Teresa: This quiz is about business etiquette.

Travis: Mmm.

Teresa: Which I believe would be more applicable to our general audience than—

Travis: Business butler. "I'm a business butler."

Teresa: [chuckles] Are you?

Travis: You're a silly goose, and I'm a business butler.

Teresa: I don't think—

Travis: "Will these two ever—?" We're detectives and we solve crimes.

Teresa: Like I said, this particular quiz is not about being a butler.

Travis: Okay, hit me with question number one.

Teresa: Alright. Your boss Ms.. Alpha enters the room when you're meeting with an important client, Mr.. Beta. These are very interesting [chuckles] names.

Travis: Oh yeah, okay. Not charged at all, okay.

Teresa: You rise and say, "Ms.. Alpha, I'd like you to meet Mr.. Beta, our client from San Diego." Is this correct?

Travis: Yes? Yes. Wait. No, I should introduce the client to her, and not her to the client

Teresa: Yes.

[bell dings twice]

Teresa: Because the client is the most important person.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: So you could say, "Mr. Beta, may I introduce Ms. Alpha," or "May I introduce you to Ms. Alpha," right?

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: Because the client—

Travis: Showcasing the importance of them of saying like, "Oh, you're—I— Yeah, it's important that you get the experience of—"

Teresa: Right.

Travis: Yeah, okay.

Teresa: If it were a... a business associate, perhaps someone who had not— who had just been hired and had not met the boss yet, you would say the boss's name first.

Travis: Okay cool, so would you give that to me? Do I get a point for that?

Teresa: Yes, I would say that that is— You get a point for that.

Travis: Nice.

Teresa: Are you keeping track of your points?

Travis: Maybe.

Teresa: Number two. At a social function, you meet the CEO of an important corporation. After a brief chat, you give him your business card. Is this correct?

Travis: Uh... I'm trying to see it from all angles of why it wouldn't be. Yes?

Teresa: Why? Why— Why yes? Why do you say that?

Travis: Networking?

Teresa: Networking is important.

Travis: So, I've meet the CEO of a different corp— company.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: And then give them my business card.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: I don't know if that's good. No, I should ask for their business card.

Teresa: Ooo, I think you're getting closer. Because then the onus is on me to further the communication instead of saying "You need to contact me about stuff."

[incorrect buzzer]

Teresa: I would say that yes, that could be an answer, but the answer that they have is very similar.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: You should only give them the business card if they ask for it.

Travis: Okay. Oh, 'cause it's like presumptuous?

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: I guess that's true, 'cause if we saw this from a— like a dating thing... [sighs] But it could be looked on differently, I guess, 'cause there's different things. But like if I met somebody, we had a conversation, and I was like, "I'd love it if you called me sometime," and give them their num— give them your number, even in that case, you should ask them for their number. And keep the onus on you, I stand by that part.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: Okay. I'm doing okay.

Teresa: How do you feel about that?

Travis: I see why from an etiquette standpoint—

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: — that kinda makes sense. I don't agree with it from a business standpoint, because then that assumes that it's like a yes or no, binary situation in which if a person has met you and would like to continue some sort of business, you know, relationship with you, they'll always ask. And if they don't want to—

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: — they won't ask. And it's like assuming like...

Teresa: I think that this question, the devil is in the detail, right. Because this is a social function, not a business function.

Travis: Sure.

Teresa: And I would put them separately. I would say that if you meet someone at like a business conference or something, during conferencing hours, not like after party business right. [chuckles] After party stuff. It's business, business, business.

Travis: Yeah, at a second location.

Teresa: [chuckles]

Travis: When you go to the warehouse rave after the company picnic.

Teresa: I would say that you should hand out those business cards, and ask people for theirs at like a business function. But at a social occasion, one should only give out business cards when asked.

Travis: I would say, and listen I'm not a butler academy, obviously, I'm a human being. But I would say that if you, at this social— in this conversation, things took a turn towards business, right.

And you could justifiably say, "Ah, you know what? This isn't supposed to be a business thing. I'd love to continue this conversation. Here's my card if you wanna pick this up, but for now, let's just focus on social," right?

Teresa: Mm!

Travis: Like if there has been an introduction to a business thing. And once again, I think that if you're going by like Emily Post, you know Miss Manners kind of rules, that that is not... Technically that's not in the bounds of etiquette, but like sometimes, if you wanna get ahead.

Teresa: [chuckles]

Travis: In this world, in business, you gotta push those a little bit. And I think that if the opportunity is there, you do run the risk of doing it and then being like, "Hmm, that was presumptuous" or whatever.

Teresa: I think that what you've— like this situation you've laid out is that... you are supposed to be talking about socially things, right?

Travis: Mm-hmm.

Teresa: Like, “Hey, how’s it goin’? Have you been to—”

Travis: “How about that local sports team?”

Teresa: Exactly. But if the conversation turns towards business—

Travis: Mm-hmm.

Teresa: — and you want to keep it out of this conversation.

Travis: That’s your escape route.

Teresa: That’s your escape route, that’s a good— I think that’s a good idea. But you have to be able to steer a conversation that way. I don’t doubt that you are able to do that.

Travis: Oh thank you very much, yes.

Teresa: But it may not be everybody’s— in everyone’s wheelhouse. Here’s another question.

Travis: Okay.

W You are entering a cab with a client. You position yourself—

Travis: Go in through the sunroof.

Teresa: [chuckles]

Travis: Is that one of ‘em?

Teresa: Nope.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: So the client is seated curbside. Is this correct?

Travis: I would put— This is just my instinct, I don’t have a reason for it for etiquette.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: But to put the client behind the driver.

Teresa: Hmm.

Travis: But I think that my reasoning is the diagonal seat tends to engage— have to engage in conversation with the driver, and kind of think that's where the payment pad is too.

Teresa: Hmm.

Travis: And so I would probably just get in first, so I could slide over, and then they can sit on whatever side the curb is.

Teresa: So yeah, that puts you— that puts the client curbside.

Travis: I don't know. I'd put them behind the driver, that's my answer.

Teresa: No.

Travis: Awww, beans.

[incorrect buzzer]

Teresa: And I think that there's actually— there's an argument for the other way, but what they're saying at the International Butler Academy—

Travis: We can just say, "at the IBA, at the IBA."

Teresa: — is that when your client steps out of the cab, they'll be on the curb side and won't have to deal with getting out in traffic, or sliding across a seat.

Travis: Oh, okay.

Teresa: I would say that that makes it a little more difficult to do things like open the door for the client, but maybe we're assuming that the driver is doing that?

Travis: Yeah. Okay. I'm also assuming like taxi I think, or payment, but if it's a chauffeur, this makes a lot more sense.

Teresa: Sure.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Let me think. Oh okay, question number, what are we on? Five.

Travis: Four? Three.

Teresa: We just did four.

Travis: Two?

Teresa: Stop it. Number five. You are hosting a dinner at a restaurant. You have preordered for everyone, and indicated where he or she should sit.

Travis: Or they.

Teresa: Or they.

Travis: Out the gate, IBA.

Teresa: Or they. Or—

Travis: Non-binary people can be clients too.

Teresa: Are you correct?

Travis: Well I would never preorder for people, so no?

Teresa: I think that this is being a business quiz, right?

Travis: Uh-huh.

Teresa: You're not preordering for your friends.

Travis: No I know, but even if I went to like business meeting kinda thing and they preordered for me, it's be like, "You don't know what mood I'm in. You don't know how many salads I've eaten today."

Teresa: [chuckles]

Travis: “Maybe I’ve had two salads, and I don’t want a salad, and I don’t want French fries, and I’m a big boy and I can’t have French fries. You don’t know, Dad.” So I wouldn’t want someone to preorder for someone, so that would be my answer, but it’s seeming like I’m wrong.

Teresa: Yes.

[incorrect buzzer]

Travis: Dang.

Teresa: It will make everyone’s life easier, and it will help the food come out faster, so there will be less time sitting idly without the food at the table. And it says people feel awkward as well when they do not know where they’re supposed to sit, so I get that. I definitely think that place cards for like a business meeting are like a great idea but—

Travis: Yeah, I disagree though.

Teresa: A lot of restaurants have prefixed kind of menus, and I think that if you wanted to do that for your client and say, “These are the three options, pick one of three” before the meeting occurs, that would be a good way to kind of juggle this, right?

Travis: I think that if it was— If I was the client in this scenario and someone reached out to me ahead of time and said, “Hey, we’re going to go to this place, and they have amazing blank. If you’re interested, I could just preorder some, have it ready to go when we get there” or whatever. And it’s like I would love that.

But if someone just assumes that they know— Like I don’t even like if like somebody orders pizza and picks toppings without consulting me, ‘cause maybe it’s fine, but part of the fun of like going— or part of the experience I would say for me of like going to a restaurant or ordering food is like getting to choose what you want.

Teresa: Hmm.

Travis: Versus just like being there and “Oh, this is the food we had in the kitchen, so this is what we’re eating.” But I think that if we’re talking about like starters, right. And it’s like, “I go like four options for the table to share as starters while we look over the mains,” I could get behind that, right. Then it’s like, “Here’s a selection of things to choose from, but your main is your own.”

Teresa: Hmm.

Travis: Your choice is your own. But once again, I also—

Teresa: The IBA does not agree.

Travis: I’m not a business butler, right?

Teresa: That’s true. [chuckles]

Travis: I’m a silly goose. And so I’m looking at it from— I am starting to see this more as like a *Cosmo* quiz.

Teresa: Oh, okay.

Travis: Where it’s like, “Are you a business butler, or a silly goose, or an anxious armadillo?”

Teresa: [chuckles]

Travis: Or whatever, “tag yourself below.” And I think that it’s the kind of thing where... if I’m going... and I’m trying— maybe I’m trying to impress a client is the difference.

Teresa: Hmm.

Travis: Versus making sure they have a fun experience.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: Which is always where I come from.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: That— Don't— Why are you smirking at me like that?

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: I want people around me to be happy.

Teresa: You can see me smirking now.

Travis: That's true. That's true. Now I have a question for you.

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: Do you wanna take a break for a word from another Max Fun show?

Teresa: Bus—

Travis: Trick question, we're doing it.

Teresa: Business says yes.

Travis: Yeah.

[transition theme music plays]

[animal roars]

Ellen: Hi everybody, it's Ellen Weatherford.

Christian: And Christian Weatherford.

Ellen: People say not to judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree.

Christian: But we can judge a snake by its ability to fly, or a spider by its ability to dive.

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Griffin: [in a mystical voice] The wizards answer, eight by eight,
the conclaves call to demonstrate
their arcane gift, their single spell.
They number 64, until...
A conflagration, 63.
And 62 they soon shall be.
As one by one, the wizards die
'til one remains, to reign on high.

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Travis: Okay, we're back. So far, I think I'm two for four.

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: Or two for five. I don't know, man. I'm doin' okay.

Teresa: Number six. A toast has been proposed in your honor.

Travis: Butter!

Teresa: No.

Travis: Oh.

Teresa: [chuckles] A toast. You say, "Thank you," and take a sip of your drink. Is this correct?

Travis: Huh. Okay, I'm trying to play it out, because I feel like there's details left out here where it's gonna be a trick question. I mean— I'm onto you.

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: That it would be like should other people drink first? Or is it they say the thing, but they toast to me, I say, "Ah, thank you," and then I say— I'm gonna say yes.

Teresa: No.

[incorrect buzzer]

Travis: [angrily mumbling] Fudge!

Teresa: You're— It—

Travis: Fudge!

Teresa: It is a trick question in the way of you do half of that. You say, "Thank you," but if the toast has been "Ah, thanks to Travis, our fearless leader," and then you say, "Thank you!" and then you sip, it's like you're toasting to yourself, which is considered rude.

Travis: What— I'm— I've been acknowledged.

Teresa: You—

Travis: Can I not acknowledge that they're correct and I'm great?

Teresa: You can acknowledge, you can say, "Thank you," you should not sip.

Travis: So I'm not supposed to drink at all.

Teresa: No no.

Travis: They drink to me?

Teresa: They drink to you, and then when the toasting is over, you can drink your drink.

Travis: See, this is why I knew it was gonna be a trick question, 'cause I was like, "Has anyone drank first?" right? Because it's like I think once they've all drank to me, it just feels like, I don't know.

Teresa: If the toast— When the toast is over. You don't— You can drink—

Travis: What is one person's really holdin' out?

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: And it's like 19 people have had their sip, and it's one guy left, and I'm like, "He's still kinda holdin' his glass like he's gonna do it, I'm so thirsty."

Teresa: When the person toasting sits down, you can take a drink.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: How's that? That's what I'm saying.

Travis: When the person toasting is done, we'll say that.

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: Because maybe they didn't stand up.

Teresa: Maybe. But when the toast is over—

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: — after you've acknowledged "Thank you," and everyone has returned to their dinner or whatever.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Then you can drink.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: You don't have to just hold it in— hold a full glass.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Okay. I agree with that, from a dinner standpoint, as well.

Travis: You agree with IBA?

Teresa: As far as like the toasting goes.

Travis: Then why don't you marry 'em?

Teresa: [chuckles] Seven. You are in a restaurant and I think soup is served in a cup with no handles. To eat it, you should pick it up and drink it.

Travis: Lap it up like a dog.

Teresa: No.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Not if— Not unless you're our children, who sometimes like to pretend that they're cats while they're eating.

Travis: Well every kid—

Teresa: Why are they doing that?

Travis: I was a dog when I was in— I don't know, it's not important.

Teresa: Pick it up and drink it. B, use the spoon provided, not picking up the cup at all. C, eat half of it with the spoon, and drink the remainder. D, use the spoon provided, picking up the cup to finish the soup completely.

Travis: Definitely not the last one.

Teresa: Okay. Why?

Travis: And it's a— 'Cause I— it makes you look greedy, like slurpin' up your drink with a straw.

Teresa: Which by the way, you should not drink hot drinks with straws. I know it's getting to be hot drink time in the world, but please do not, because you can burn your throat.

Travis: So, it— Was it a small bowl with no handles? Is that what you said?

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: I think you drink it.

Teresa: It's a— It is a cup of soup with no handles.

Travis: And a spoon is provided?

Teresa: And a spoon, yes.

Travis: I mean I would eat it with the spoon, but I don't know if that's correct.

Teresa: So according to them, you can do two of those options. So you can use the spoon and not pick up the cup at all, just use it like you would until you can't eat anymore, and then don't pick it up to drink, right. Or you can pick up the cup to finish the soup once you have eaten everything you can with the spoon.

Travis: So I was wrong, it was the last one.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: Aw man, that seems so childish though.

Teresa: I would not. If it was served in a cup without a handle, right.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: I would just say, "This is just a very small bowl. I will eat what I can eat with the spoon, and then just leave the rest."

Travis: And I know that there are some— like if it came without a spoon, right, then my assumption is—

Teresa: You drink it.

Travis: — we're drinking it.

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: Right? Or if like the spoon was just part of the place setting, and then that served with no soup spoon or whatever, I would assume we were drinking it. But there's something about like, "I've eaten as much as I can, and now I'm picking up the rest and kind of shooting it back" where I'm like, "That seems—"

Teresa: I mean, it's all up to personal preference, right? You don't have to eat or finish any food that you don't want to, right?

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: So I would not want to pick it up to finish it, but someone might, and this is just for the International Butler Academy. I am sure that there are some cultures where this is a different answer.

Travis: Okay. Next question.

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: I don't feel like I'm doing great at this point.

Teresa: I think that you are— your brain is working, but I think that we need to try and like focus in on like—

Travis: Business.

Teresa: — business.

Travis: Business, okay.

Teresa: You are at a dinner.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: And champagne is served with dessert.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: You simply cannot drink champagne yet, knowing the host will be offering a toast. You should... tell the waiter no champagne. Turn over your glass. Ask the waiter to pour water into your champagne glass instead. Or say nothing and allow the champagne to be poured.

Travis: I— Okay. I'm looking at this and trying to think of it from a business standpoint.

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: And I think say nothing and allow the champagne to be poured, if that is what is happening for people.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: And then not drink it until the toast is made, if you know the toast is coming. Right? Because otherwise unless you know when the toast is coming, you'd have to signal the waiter back over—

Teresa: Right.

Travis: — and then ask for champagne.

Teresa: Or— I think that what this question is saying is that like you personally do not drink champagne. And yet champagne is being offered for the purpose of the toast.

Travis: But it says that champagne is being served with the dessert, you can't drink the champagne yet, knowing that the person is going to make the toast.

Teresa: I— Perhaps I read it incorrectly. After reading the answer, I know that what they're actually asking is... you don't drink champagne.

Travis: Oh, okay.

Teresa: Even though it's being served as a part—

Travis: You can't drink champagne, yet—

Teresa: Exactly.

Travis: — you know that there's a toast coming.

Teresa: But you know there will be a toast.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: There is a toast and that's what the champagne is for with dessert, but you don't drink champagne.

Travis: I mean, what I would probably do in that scenario—

Teresa: And there was no comma.

Travis: Yes, that was— Hey, IBA.

Teresa: I did the best I could.

Travis: That's why they're not the International Apostrophe Association.

Teresa: Ahhh.

Travis: I— My gut is saying to take the champagne and say nothing and just don't drink it, 'cause I don't think you're supposed to do water for a toast, and I think turning your glass over seems rude?

Teresa: Yes. So, you are correct. You should take the champagne and just not drink it, because it's more impolite to call attention to yourself by asking for water, or by refusing the champagne. And so when the toast happens, you can just lift the glass with everyone else, and then not drink it.

Travis: Yeah. That feels right.

Teresa: Yeah. That makes sense to me as well. I mean, like I said, this is like a business business business thing.

Travis: Business business business business. Buy sell, buy sell. High low, cost benefit analysis.

Teresa: I think that were you at like an actual dinner party.

Travis: I mean if I'm going to a dinner party and I don't drink right.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: Or— Then I'm probably going to clarify for them "Would you like me to bring a non-alcoholic option, or will there be non-alcoholic options available?"

Teresa: Right.

Travis: Or if it's just in the moment, maybe I don't drink champagne or maybe I don't want champagne in that moment.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: Then I think it's fine, you have a host right to say like—

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: — "Is there— Do you have anything?" or if not it's just water is fine.

Teresa: Or I would wait until after the toast, and leave the champagne and say, "Can I have something else to drink, please?"

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Number nine.

Travis: It is important to note there, in both of those situations, you don't have to drink the thing.

Teresa: Absolutely.

Travis: At all.

Teresa: Like I said earlier, you don't have to drink or eat anything you don't want. Number nine.

Travis: This is why it's good to make friends with someone else who's there.

Teresa: [chuckles]

Travis: And it's like, "[whispers] Do you want mine? They poured me a big boy glass of champagne and I don't want it. Does anyone want it?"

Teresa: Although, at a business affair, I do think that two drinks is maximum.

Travis: There is—

Teresa: Just so that everyone knows.

Travis: There was a— [sighs] Oh, what was it? There— The... Oh, now I'm forgetting it, that Mitchel and Webb like sketch where it was like, "Oh, you wanna be good in business, you need to have two drinks, and then a little bit of the third, but never finish the third." And it was like a running like bit in the thing—

Teresa: Oh really?

Travis: — that like after two drinks, you're like loosened up, but don't finish the third one or you're too drunk!

Teresa: Oh.

Travis: And then he makes it I think to become President based on it.

Teresa: Okay. I mean, I agree. Number nine, you are at a table in a restaurant for a business dinner. Midway through the meal, you are called to the telephone. What do you do with your napkin? So I am assuming that they've called— someone have called the restaurant and you must leave the table. I think that... this day and age... business is often conducted at the table, but then—

Travis: Or like if you're there and you have to take a phone call.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: And you have to step away from the table that everyone else—

Teresa: It's gonna be long, longer than "I'm in a meeting, please call me back later," right.

Travis: I believe... my brain is telling me, and I've decided to trust him.

Teresa: Oh, wait.

Travis: Oh!

Teresa: This is a multiple choice.

Travis: Oh, okay.

Teresa: So you have options. Take it with you. Fold it and place it—

Travis: Like a cape.

Teresa: Like a— [wheezes] Like a cape.

Travis: Yeah, like a cape, like you're a TV superhero, yeah.

Teresa: Like a blankie. Fold it and place it to the left of your plate.

Travis: Mm.

Teresa: Fold it and place it to the right of the plate, or leave it on your chair.

Travis: I wanna say fold it and place it to the right of your plate. I think, that's what I'm picturing myself doing, "Excuse me," right.

[incorrect buzzer]

Teresa: Putting your napkin on the table at all is considered a sign that you are finished. So you put it on your chair. Sometimes—

Travis: And draw a little face on it so that it looks like you and hang it on the back—

Teresa: [giggles]

Travis: — and people can keep talking to you.

Teresa: Sometimes what I find happens is this occasionally happens to me at a restaurant, where I'll need to use a restroom, or take a child to the restroom or something, and I put my napkin on my chair, right? And when I come back, a server has taken the napkin from the seat of my chair and placed it on the back of my chair.

Travis: Mm.

Teresa: Because they don't want me to have to sit on the napkin, I guess. I don't quite understand why that happens, maybe so it's a little easier to get to, I'm not sure. But it's the chair, not the table.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: 'Cause the table says, "I'm done, I don't need this no more." Alright, number, what are we on? 10. There's a lot.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: We might not get to all of them. [sighs]

Travis: Okay, that's fine.

Teresa: Okay. You're hosting a dinner party at a restaurant. Included are three other couples, including your most valuable client and his wife.

Travis: Uh-huh.

Teresa: You instruct the waiter to serve your spouse first, serve your client's spouse first, serve you first, or server you and your spouse last.

Travis: Serve us all at the exact same time.

Teresa: [chuckles] Bring a fleet of waiters—

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: — so that everyone can do it all at the same time.

Travis: Simultaneously synchronized serving. I wanna say serve my client's spouse first.

Teresa: Mm, okay.

Travis: Because if I said serve me and my wife last, that doesn't indicate which of the other two sets could— should go first. But go to my client's spouse first is my—

Teresa: Your instincts are correct.

[bell rings twice]

Teresa: You can do either though. You can instruct the waiter to serve the client's spouse first, or instruct them to serve you and your spouse last, as long as you and your spouse are not served first.

Travis: Okay. Well I think I'm right in the hierarchy of what's happening there.

Teresa: I think you're right too, that is what I would also do. If I were a business business business.

Travis: If I were a business butler.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: What would a business butler do? W-W-B-B-D.

Teresa: [chuckles] Okay, here's number 11. You're invited to a reception, and the invitation states 7 to 9pm. You should or you are supposed to—

Travis: That's what should means.

Teresa: Well.

Travis: You're fine.

Teresa: You are allowed to.

Travis: You— Yes.

Teresa: You should, or you are allowed to, arrive at 6:55pm.

Travis: Uh-huh.

Teresa: Arrive any time between seven PM and 8:30pm, arrive any time between seven PM and nine PM, or arrive around nine PM.

Travis: Okay, so the invite says what?

Teresa: Says seven to nine, reception seven to nine.

Travis: And this is for a dinner party, or it's just a party?

Teresa: Dinner party.

Travis: I would say if reception is— Uh, mm, between seven and 8:30.

Teresa: Correct.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Yes. I agree with this as well. If you haven't set something like, "Dinner will be served at 7:30pm," right?

Travis: Right.

Teresa: That implies that you're gonna eat at 7:30, be there before 7:30.

Travis: Right.

Teresa: But always never before the invitation starts.

Travis: No, for a professional businessy thing, no.

Teresa: Yes, we would—

Travis: I mean if it's your friend's house and it's like, "Do you want me to come over early and help you set up?"

Teresa: Sure.

Travis: But even then, you should ask first.

Teresa: Even then, you should ask, yeah. So not before 7, obviously. And then it would be impolite, I think, to arrive any time— They think, we both think.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: It would be impolite to arrive after 8:30, or—

Travis: 'Cause by the they're shifting gears into whatever's happening after that.

Teresa: Right, or they're cleaning up, right?

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Everyone is finishing at that point.

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: Because if the event lasts until nine, the idea is that if you're only there for a half an hour of it, like what are you doing?

Travis: I assume it's the same— I think of it like restaurant rules.

Teresa: Mm.

Travis: Right? Where if a restaurant's open from like four to 11, I wouldn't walk up to a restaurant at 3:30 and be upset that the door was still locked.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: And you shouldn't show up at like 10:58 and be like, "You guys are still open," right? Like—

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: No.

Teresa: That's dumb.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Don't do that.

Travis: Don't do that. And so like I think it's that kind of thing of like yeah man, the doors aren't gonna be locked, you know at 8:30.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: But by then, that's the downhill of, you know, that's the other side of the mountain, they're heading down at that point.

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: And yeah yeah yeah.

Teresa: Number 12. You are introduced to a new colleague. This is a work colleague.

Travis: A new collie? Like Lassie?

Teresa: Colleague.

Travis: Okay. That makes a lot more sense. Unless you're a business butler for some kind of famous animal.

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Which—

Travis: Which has gotta be an awesome— that's an awesome job.

Teresa: Now, instead of picking the right one, we're gonna pick the wrong one. Which one is clearly wrong?

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: "Hello, I've heard so much about you."

"How do you do?"

"It's a pleasure to meet you."

"Hello, how are you?"

Travis: It's gotta be "I've heard so much about you."

Teresa: I think that that is correct as well.

[bell rings twice]

Teresa: I wouldn't—

Travis: Because then it's saying "People have talked about you when you weren't around."

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: It that not right?

Teresa: No, that's correct.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: That's correct, that's clearly wrong. You should not say that. Because it's like, "Oh, you guys have been talking about me behind my back?"

Travis: Well, it's one of those things of like it's kinda tropey in writing and stuff in movies and TV, where someone'll say, "All good things, I hope," right.

Teresa: Oh right.

Travis: Because there is an implied anxiety when it's like— Even good things, right, like if somebody— Like if I show up somewhere and someone says that to me, even if someone was saying good things about me before I got there, I don't know what was discussed.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: And even if it's all positive stuff, I don't wanna walk in and be like, "Is there some expectation for me that I'm about to not meet? Or I don't know what they've promised you about this experience." Like I consider myself to be like a funny, entertaining person.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: But if someone's been sitting there for like, "Oh my god, Travis is so funny, like he's really gonna like just light this room up." And then I get there and everyone's like, "[gasps] Okay, now go," right.

Teresa: [chuckles]

Travis: Like it's like, "I don't know, man." And so even if the assumption is it was all positive things.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: Then it's still like, "Well what were you say— What was it?"

Teresa: I think that—

Travis: Or you can say—

Teresa: Oh.

Travis: I think that there is a, "It's a pleasure to meet you. Some mutual acquaintance speaks very highly of you."

Teresa: Oh, that's a good one.

Travis: Right?

Teresa: I like that.

Travis: Because then you're saying like, you know, that they think well of you, and it gives more of, I think in— And it's contextual or implied, it's kind of a general— It's not like they've sat me down and told me three specific great things about you. It's just that "When they talk, like they've mentioned you before and it's been overall, like you know, a really positive vibe."

Teresa: It feels very posh, but I think that you could say like, "I've been hoping to achieve an introduction," or something like that, to let them—

Travis: "I've been looking forward to meeting you."

Teresa: "Looking forward to meeting you," something like that.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Or like if it's not a new work colleague, right, that's what we're talking about here, I think that you could say, "We were just talking about you," or "We're very excited—"

Travis: Ah, even that I don't like.

Teresa: No? You don't think so?

Travis: Because then it still is like, "Before you came in, right, we were talking about you." Or like anything that's like, "What were you saying?" right. Because— But that's also like because I think me personally, where like I have— I wanna know what people are saying about me.

Teresa: Well what I'm saying is that kind of thing happens so often, like we see that in movies and TV, like you said, "All good things, I hope," or "Speak of the Devil," or whatever it is, right.

Travis: I think the assumption should always be that if you are going to imply that you were talking about this person recently before they, you know, before this meeting, you need to be— like follow it up with what was it, right.

Teresa: Oh, so like, “I was just telling them about how you had just bought your new house,” right? Or something like that.

Travis: Right, or if we— “Oh, I just mentioned you. Do you agree that blah blah blah blah blah,” right?

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: And so then it’s— I’m immediately saying like, “I knew that you would have an opinion on this question, let me get your take on it, right?”

Teresa: Mm.

Travis: And not— Because there is also I think, and once again I think it’s from TV and movies, where if you say like, “Oh, we were just talking about you,” it’s like, “Are you being like coy about like actually you were bad mouthing me, but now I’m in and it’s kind of a wink thing you’re saying to the other person.”

Teresa: Mmm...

Travis: And it’s like, “What were you—” You know what I mean?

Teresa: That does happen in movies and TV.

Travis: Yeah, and it’s like that’s the kind of thing people worry about, I think, when you say, “Oh, we were just talking about you.”

Teresa: Question 13.

Travis: Let’s just make— And we’ll make this the last one. Let’s not do—

Teresa: I can’t end on 13.

Travis: Oh, okay. We’ll do two more.

Teresa: Miss Manners would never allow it.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Okay. Are— You are talking with a group of four people. With whom do you make eye contact? One, the person with whom you are speaking at that moment. Next, each of the four, moving your eye contact from one to the other. Or with the three people you are not speaking to at the moment. Or no particular person?

Travis: Hm. Hm. Now this is tricky because I'm trying to think of this from a business perspective. 'Cause me personally, what I try to do is if I'm talking like with you, right, and there's two other people on our left and right, I would look to them to try to indicate like, "What do you think? Or let's— you're all included in this."

But I think from a business, if this is like a business meeting, I'm looking at the person I'm talking to? No, no particular order.

Teresa: [chuckles] I was sending it to you, you were right to begin with. You wanna include everyone in the conversation, make eye contact with all individuals in the group, and I think that that's a normal thing that people do, right?

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: We were talking about it at the beginning of this episode, where like I was looking over here, thinking about what I'm saying, and then I'm listening to you, so I'm looking at you. Or you know, trying to draw people in, keep people excited in the conversation, we look at all of them, kind of—

Travis: There is also a thing that I see happen a lot in like meeting, you know, like a green room of like creative people or whatever, where sometimes there will be like someone who maybe is considered to have higher status. And if somebody walks up in the middle of a conversation and just locks into that person and is only talking to them—

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: — it's so very like obvious, and like it being like, "Oh, I'm getting boxed out of this conversation." And often times this person that this is being directed towards is like, "Okay, I was talking to these people as well."

Teresa: Right.

Travis: And so like that can happen a lot as well, and it's not really as beneficial I think as people think. Where it's way better if you join a conversation. Also from the other perspective, if you're looking at this from a business way, especially if you don't know them, but even if you do, hierarchy and status changes all the time.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: And people can like— someone who's like, "I'm not interested in this person 'cause they're not important to me. This person's important because they're so successful, and I wanna work with them." It's like but you don't know what these other two people are gonna do in the next year.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: And you're doing— Better to just include everybody in the—

Teresa: Yeah, you can't make enemies like that.

Travis: That's not how I live my life socially, by the way.

Teresa: [chuckles]

Travis: I'm just saying from a business point of view, the idea of like, "I don't care about these two people 'cause they're not gonna help my career in any way."

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: Is one, not a message you wanna send. Two, not a cool way to live your life. Okay, one more so we don't end on 13.

Teresa: Okay. You are invited to dinner in a private home. When do you take your napkin from the table and place it in your lap? Immediately when you sit down, wait for the host or hostess to take his or her napkin or their napkin before taking yours.

Travis: Mm.

Teresa: Wait for the oldest person at the table to take theirs, or wait for the acknowledged head of the table to take theirs before taking yours.

Travis: Well darn, none of the ones I was gonna say were in that list.

Teresa: Well what were you gonna say?

Travis: I was gonna say when the first thing is served.

Teresa: Mm.

Travis: Okay, give me the options again, 'cause I was waiting for the one I thought it was.

Teresa: Okay. The options again are... Immediately when you sit down.

Travis: Uh-huh.

Teresa: Wait for the host or hostess to take their napkin before taking yours. Wait for the oldest person at the table to take theirs. Wait for the head of the table to take theirs before taking yours.

Travis: So my answer, and I don't think it's correct but I have a justification. That justification is "I don't know what I'm doing, so I'd wait for someone else to do it."

Teresa: Mm.

Travis: I'm gonna say wait for the host to take theirs.

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: Because that way I know that even if that's not what I was supposed to do, they were wrong first.

Teresa: Ahhh. The IBA that you can do that, or you can wait for the head of the table.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: So either one, just not when you immediately sit down. You can wait for either the host, or the head of the table to do it.

Travis: But either way, it seems like an acknowledgment of like a status thing, right? Yeah.

Teresa: I think so, yeah. I feel like when I'm out to dinner, I don't usually take my napkin off of my plate until after we've ordered, right?

Travis: Mm.

Teresa: I feel like that's the kind of like... This is what we're doing now, right?

Travis: Right.

Teresa: This is— We went through the menu, we ordered and that server has been here and gone. The next step is we are waiting for food, we can take the napkin off of the plate.

Travis: And listen, no matter what, I know it seems jokey, don't tuck it into your shirt. Tuck it into your pants.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: And then when you get up to go take a call or whatever, you don't have to worry about it, it'll just be right there, hanging on the front of your pants while you take your call.

Teresa: [chuckles] Like a loincloth.

Travis: Like a loincloth. Hey everybody, thank you so much for joining us. Thank you to our editor Rachel, without whom—

Teresa: Wait.

Travis: Wait, oh.

Teresa: Wait.

Travis: Wait. Wait.

Teresa: Your scores.

Travis: Oh.

Teresa: If you got all of them correct, it—

Travis: You're a business butler.

Teresa: It says, "You're savvy and polite, and you know how to make others feel comfortable and important."

Travis: And what if I got only some of them correct?

Teresa: If you got only some, "You're doing well, but you may miss a detail here or there."

Travis: "You're an anxious armadillo."

Teresa: "Take a little time to brush up." But if you got most of them wrong—

Travis: You're a silly goose.

Teresa: — "You may find yourself doing or saying the wrong thing too often. Observe the behavior of others near—"

Travis: "And you may find yourself! Living in a shotgun shack!"

Teresa: "And our guide to business etiquette will help you considerably."
[laughs]

Travis: Oh, of course. Of course it will. "Just buy our thing."

Teresa: I mean it's free.

Travis: I'm a silly goose, I can't say—

Teresa: It's free, you don't have to buy it.

Travis: Oh okay.

Teresa: I mean if you go to the academy, I'm certain you'd have to pay for it. But this quiz? Free.

Travis: Okay. As I was saying.

Teresa: Yes, yes.

Travis: Thank you to our editor Rachel, without whom we could not make this show.

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: Thank you to our researcher Alex, without whom we could not make this show. And thank you to you for listening. We couldn't have made this show without you. I think this was user submitted, is that true? Someone sent this to Alex?

Teresa: Oh, I'm not certain.

Travis: Okay, we'll follow up on that.

Teresa: But if they did, thank you.

Travis: Thank you. Also, Candlenights tickets are on sale now.

Teresa: Wa-hoo!

Travis: If you go to [bit.ly/ I believe candlenightstickets24](https://bit.ly/candlenightstickets24), you can get your tickets there. We did a really fun Candlenights in Trav Nation segment that I think you guys are really gonna enjoy. And all the proceeds go to benefit Harmony House in our— in my hometown of Huntington, West Virginia. Your adopted hometown at this point.

Teresa: Indeed.

Travis: What else, Teresa?

Teresa: We always thank Brent “Brentalfloss” Black for writing out theme music, which is available as a ringtone where those are found. Also thank you to Bruja Betty Pin Up 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.

As always, we are taking your topic submissions, your questions, your idioms. Please send those to shmannerscast@gmail.com, and say hi to Alex, 'cause she reads every single one. I am finding that this quiz was actually sent to *MBMBaM*.

Travis: Oh! Excellent, well thank you guys so much, thank you everybody. 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?

[outro theme music plays]

[ukulele chord]

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