

## Shmanners 495: Ask Shmanners

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["Shmanners Theme" by brentalfloss plays]

**Travis:** Hello, internet!

[pause]

**Travis:** I'm your husband host, Travis McElroy.

**Teresa:** [chuckles] 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. Did you forget who you were for a second? [chuckles]

**Travis:** I clapped—because we've been recording video with our audio, coming soon, or at least clips. And I clapped to sync it so loud that I scared myself after the thing. And I was ready to say like, "Hello, internet, welcome to Shmanners."

**Teresa:** Oh? That's not—

**Travis:** But that's not it!

**Teresa:** Mm-mm, that's not how we do.

**Travis:** But I'm here now.

**Teresa:** Yes.

**Travis:** I'm so mindful and present that I can't remember what I'm doing. You know what I mean? I'm so in the moment.

**Teresa:** Oh, okay?

**Travis:** That I forgot the previous moment.

**Teresa:** The past doesn't exist anymore, because you are right here, right now.

**Travis:** And the future doesn't exist yet. So like, nothing means anything.

**Teresa:** Okay?

**Travis:** Nothing I do means anything. Cause and effect are a myth.

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** Life is a dream. What if this is The Matrix? So...

**Teresa:** All right.

**Travis:** Welcome to another episode of Ask Shmanners.

**Teresa:** Mm-hm!

**Travis:** You asked, so we'll Shmanner.

**Teresa:** Yes, indeed. We love these. Absolutely love these. And we really appreciate everybody who sends these in. Please do continue to send these in, [shmannerscast@gmail.com](mailto:shmannerscast@gmail.com). And please put "Ask Shmanners" in the subject line, because Alexx lovingly reads and catalogs everything you send in.

**Travis:** Here's my first question. Dear Shmanners, what do I do when I have CPAP bedhead from wearing my CPAP, but I'm trying to film my podcast? And now I can't stop looking at the little monitor screen on the camera saying—is my hair too tall?

**Teresa:** [chuckles] It's never too tall.

**Travis:** Okay, it's full of dreams! Okay.

**Teresa:** Yes.

**Travis:** What's our actual first question?

**Teresa:** Okay, our actual first question—these are long form questions, by the way, please be aware. Submitted by Luke F. "Recently, my wife and I were in the drive-through of a fast-food place, and we had been waiting roughly 10 minutes or so. Once making it to the window and being handed our food, I stayed parked by the window to confirm the accuracy of our order."

**Travis:** Correct.

**Teresa:** "My wife said I should move forward, and that I was being rude to the people in line still behind us. When I pointed out that I was just checking to be sure we'd gotten everything, she insisted that I should pull up to check, and then get out of the car and go in if something is missing. Is that not defeating the purpose of the drive-through altogether? What is the proper drive-through etiquette?"

**Travis:** Huh. Okay, as so often happens on Shmanners, and Ask Shmanners specifically, I'm sure that you will have a well-reasoned, whatever the guide is, you know, if Emily Post was hitting up Taco Bell, here's what Emily Post would say about it.

**Teresa:** [chuckles]

**Travis:** Here's what I'm going to say about it! Any added inconvenience to my fast-food experience, especially in a drive-through, as Lucas said, defeats the purpose.

**Teresa:** Okay.

**Travis:** Right? That said, I don't think you should be sitting there catalog like—

**Teresa:** Just Luke, by the way. Did I say Lucas? Because I meant to just say—

**Travis:** No, Luke F, I think is what's—

**Teresa:** Oh, Luke F, yes, indeed.

**Travis:** Like, you know, if you ordered four burgers, but each one had like different special requests for them, I think you can look in the bag to make sure there are four burgers.

**Teresa:** Mm-hm.

**Travis:** And that's as far as you get to go. You don't get to sit there and unwrap everything, count how many fries are in each one to see if you've got the right amount of fries, right? Like, there's food here, is what's present.

**Teresa:** A cursory look, to be sure.

**Travis:** Unless.

**Teresa:** Okay?

**Travis:** And we don't normally do this, but when I say "unless," you're supposed to say "unless." That's what happens on My Brother, My Brother and Me.

**Teresa:** Okay, try again.

**Travis:** Unless!

**Teresa:** Unless?

**Travis:** It is an allergy concern or a dietary concern.

**Teresa:** Mm-hm.

**Travis:** I think that like if you were like, "If I eat onions, I'll die." And you want to check and make sure there are not onions on the burger that you need to eat to sustain your life, I think that's fair.

**Teresa:** Okay. The correct answer is, it's personal preference. Because—

**Travis:** So just do what you want! It's the Purge! You know?! Stare 'em dead in the eye while you look in your fast-food bag to see what's there.

**Teresa:** First, let's talk about what your wife wants, which, you know, happy wife, happy life.

**Travis:** What about happy husband, happy husband? No one ever talks about that!

**Teresa:** [chuckles]

**Travis:** Happy spouse, happy house.

**Teresa:** Okay.

**Travis:** Or, what if they live in an apartment? Hold on.

**Teresa:** [chuckles]

**Travis:** Just keep going.

**Teresa:** Okay.

**Travis:** Keep going.

**Teresa:** Okay. It is—

**Travis:** Happy marriage, happy carriage. That's if you're in a car.

**Teresa:** [titters] Okay.

**Travis:** That one works in a car.

**Teresa:** So, it is respectful to pull forward and get out and go correct an order if it needs it, right? That's always allowed. Going in does usually get your order fixed a little faster, right? Because if it's—if something's wrong and you go in and you stand there and you look at them, they are probably going to fix it right then.

**Travis:** I do—

**Teresa:** However—

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** However—

**Travis:** Okay. Okay.

**Teresa:** While you're at the drive-through window, you're always allowed to look at your food before you drive off. You do not have to take it with you sight unseen, okay? And try and remember that when it is your turn, it is your turn, okay? The people behind you, yes, they may be frustrated, but odds are they were already frustrated if you guys have been waiting 10 minutes, right? So, you're not in trouble here. It's not your fault. So, you are allowed to look at your food, right? Not like you said, like make sure that every burger is the specialty burger that you ordered.

**Travis:** Yeah. No itemized kind of—

**Teresa:** Right. But looking in the bag, counting how many, making sure that both the kids got whatever toy or whatever.

**Travis:** That's so important.

**Teresa:** So important, right? That is okay.

**Travis:** It is one of my greatest fears whenever we have to like have food delivered, that it's like, it's one thing if they forgot my meal, right? I'll make do.

**Teresa:** [titters]

**Travis:** If they forget one of my children's meals? Especially if they don't—forget the other one.

**Teresa:** Ah, I—

**Travis:** And I'm like, what do I do now? In this trolley problem scenario you've set up for me, the only answer is, I very quickly eat the other child's food, and then I say—

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** "There must—there's no food for—"

**Teresa:** "There's nothing here."

**Travis:** "They eat—they told me, they ran out of chicken nuggets. I don't know what to tell you."

**Teresa:** "Who wants peanut butter and jelly?"

**Travis:** Yeah, right?

**Teresa:** [chuckles] Yeah. I mean, I think that drive-through is so tricky, right? Because you do want it to be fast, and there are certain restaurants that put the priority on the drive-through orders. But you also don't want to eat food that's been sitting out, right?

**Travis:** Mm-hm.

**Teresa:** And so, there is a delicate balance of like fast, but also quality, that I think that I am particularly willing to wait for.

**Travis:** [sings] I'm willing to wait for it.

**Teresa:** Wait for it.

**Travis:** That song's about McDonald's.

**Teresa:** I think so.

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Teresa:** All right—

**Travis:** Lin will never admit that, but it's true, I—we know him.

**Teresa:** [chuckles]

**Travis:** "Wait for it" was originally about McDonald's, and then he just used it for Hamilton. It originally was for hamburgers.

**Teresa:** I don't think this is a show he listens to.

**Travis:** Oh, okay.

**Teresa:** Anyway.

**Travis:** Not yet! Now he's going to be like, "What did Travis say?"

**Teresa:** [laughs] This is from Allie V. "My favorite coffee shop is down the street, and I like to go there on the weekends to do hobbies with a nice cup of joe. However, when I was there last, there was an older gentleman who had decided it was fine to nonstop open mouth cough every few minutes. No handkerchief to cover his mouth, no excusing himself to the bathroom, no hand sanitizer in sight, nothing. Me and everyone else I could see in the coffee shop was deeply uncomfortable, for obvious reasons."

**Travis:** Mm-hm.

**Teresa:** "Is there any way to politely but firmly tell this man that he has to stop spraying the shop with all of his germs?"

**Travis:** We've talked about this kind of thing—not this exact kind of thing before.

**Teresa:** Mm-hm.

**Travis:** But when you are like... I don't want to say a guest, but a patron at an establishment, that's part of the reason like the social contract is, you shouldn't feel like you need to address it directly. You can go to like the staff, right? And be—if anything else—because if nothing else—if everything else, because there is more implied authority from like a staff member coming over and being like, "Hey, you know, this is a shared space. Do you mind covering your mouth when you cough?" Versus you doing it, right? I think if there is a problem, if the person gets very defensive and gets very upset, the staff can deal with it in a way that you simply cannot, right?

**Teresa:** That's true. And I do think that that is an avenue that you can take. So, we've already addressed that this person wants to stay at the coffee shop, because if it's me, I'm like, I'm going to go find somewhere else to be.

**Travis:** I can—I should also point out—sorry to interrupt.

**Teresa:** Okay.

**Travis:** I never do that. Is that, it is also inherently by going to a staff members politely—it is a good kind of filter for whether you're overreacting or not, I think. Because maybe in your opinion, everybody's visibly uncomfortable, right?

**Teresa:** Mm-hm.

**Travis:** And it's this—not saying, Question Asker, that this is true. But everyone's visibly uncomfortable, everyone's upset about this. And it's like, well, maybe you are upset about this, and you are kind of projecting that onto everybody else. And if you were to confront this person, you might be seen as like the instigator and the bad person, right? Whereas if you were to

go to the staff and be like, "I just wanted to bring this to your attention." And then they can decide if that's actually something worth bringing up or not.

**Teresa:** Sure. I think that there is a—so, the—

**Travis:** I would leave.

**Teresa:** Let's enumerate the options, okay. So, first of all, you can leave, right? That is probably what I would do as well.

**Travis:** Yeah, me too.

**Teresa:** I would be like, hey, we can take this to go—or somewhere else, right? Go outside, whatever it is. There is number two, yes, get the staff, right? Because like you said, they have more inherent authority. I mean, anyone wearing a uniform usually gets, you know, gets more things done. And I think there's a secret third option where—

**Travis:** Cough louder than them.

**Teresa:** [chuckles] No.

**Travis:** More powerfully! So it blows their cough back into their face.

**Teresa:** Where you go—

**Travis:** A cough off!

**Teresa:** Up to this person and lead with, "Are you all right? Can I help you? Do you need some tissue or do you need a glass of water?" I think that if you ask them if they're okay, maybe it will draw attention to the fact that everyone can see them coughing a lot. And then I think you say—if they say, "Oh, no, I'm fine. It's all right." And I say, "Well then, would you mind covering your mouth when you cough?"

**Travis:** I think that that is definitely an option.

**Teresa:** Mm-hm.

**Travis:** I think the reason that I would not be comfortable doing it is that I know myself well enough that if I've been sitting there thinking about it for any amount of time, my ability to keep that frustration from being present in my voice, and it sounding passive-aggressive no matter what I do, like that's what's going to— "Are you all right? Do you need something? Because like—"

**Teresa:** [chuckles]

**Travis:** "It's *gross*, right? You're being real grody over there."

**Teresa:** Yeah, all of these I think are acceptable answers, and it really depends—

**Travis:** Even the cough louder?

**Teresa:** [chuckles] No, not cough louder.

**Travis:** Oh.

**Teresa:** The ones that I mentioned are acceptable answers, and it really depends on your comfortability, because this is what we're talking about, right? This is about you being comfortable. It is not impolite to ask for help. It is not impolite to calmly and respectfully request that they cover their mouth, right?

**Travis:** Yup. But I think it's another thing that we address a lot, which is like, be prepared that it might not be well-received.

**Teresa:** Mm-hm.

**Travis:** That does not mean that you were in the wrong for asking for it.

**Teresa:** Mm-hm.

**Travis:** But just as you get to say what you need, people will react the way that they react.

**Teresa:** Right.

**Travis:** That doesn't mean you were wrong to do it, but it might not be well-received. Like, the chances that this person isn't being considerate enough to cover their mouth and then is going to go, "Oh my god, I'm so sorry. I didn't even realize." Right? Is like... They're probably going to get defensive and be surly. But you said something, right? So, your concerns are out there now.

**Teresa:** If I didn't decide to leave and I went the route of, "Are you okay? Can I help you?" And they became belligerent, right? Or self-defensive, right? Then you have the option of alerting the staff or hopefully they will intervene at that point. And then you can leave.

**Travis:** And even more secret option, loudly announce, "Ha, talk about cough-ee! Am I right?!"

**Teresa:** Oh, boy.

**Travis:** And see if you can get everybody to like cheer for you.

**Teresa:** [chuckles] That's a very secret option.

**Travis:** It's a very secret option. Don't do it.

**Teresa:** Okay.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** From Cassander R, "I went to my brother's house to celebrate the holidays, and I thought it would be nice for me to bring a nice bag of coffee for us to drink in the mornings. However, it turned out that he had no way to make this coffee, despite me remembering him having a French press when I visited before." Been there. Man, I thought we had a—

**Travis:** Wait, no way?!

**Teresa:** I thought we had a—

**Travis:** No way to make it?!

**Teresa:** French press, and we didn't, and I was very sad. Anyway.

**Travis:** I thought you meant like no grinder. But there was no way in the house to make coffee?! That's a prank.

**Teresa:** That is what this says.

**Travis:** He was pranking you!

**Teresa:** Please let me continue.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** "Once more, he thought I brought the bag of coffee over to the house as a gift. So, I cut my losses and let him keep my coffee. I'm going back to his house soon for another family gathering. I know he still has my coffee. Would it be rude of me to bring my own pour over? And more importantly, will that end up with me coming home with one less coffee gadget?"

**Travis:** Hm, this is—so, Justin and Griffin and I have recently been talking about like, we've started to shy away from relationship, like first date, "how do I talk to this person" kind of questions. Because the three of us have been in relationships for so long and stuff that like we just feel completely unprepared to address in any way like, how to ask someone out on a date, right?

This idea to me of like my older brother or my brother didn't have a way to make coffee in the house and I brought coffee, and that not being addressed openly, is wild to me. And granted, this isn't like because you were wrong, it's because my brothers and I, as a first reaction, give each other such a

hard time for things. Where I'm like, "Wha—I brought co... What do you mean?"

**Teresa:** [chuckles]

**Travis:** "What do you mean you don't have a way to make coffee in your home? Are you okay? Have you been robbed? Were you robbed? Someone, like a Hamburglar type character but for coffee, came in and stole whatever way you make coffee? Are you okay? Do you need me to go buy you a coffee maker? How bad is it? How bad are you doing financially? What's wrong? Talk to me." Right? These things would come up.

**Teresa:** Yeah, they would.

**Travis:** And the idea of being like "so I just left the coffee there and I don't know what to do" is like—well, you could say like, "Hey, you know that coffee I left at your house, have you at any point in the last three or four months purchased a way to make it? Wild that you think I'd bring you a gift for a thing you can't use, but—"

**Teresa:** Yeah.

**Travis:** "Because I will be returning to your house soon, where I would like to consume coffee. Will you be able to provide that?"

**Teresa:** I mean, yes, definitely. I think that there are options here. Again, it depends on the way that you feel good about it, right? You could always just suck it up and let him keep the fancy coffee—

**Travis:** That he can't use, unless he's hiding—did you break his French press at some point? And now he's like, "Oh, no, she's—I gotta hide. Gotta hide my French press. Oh, coffee? Thank you!" Does he just eat the grounds?

**Teresa:** I don't know.

**Travis:** Oh...

**Teresa:** Maybe. Use them in baking? I don't know. And you could let him keep the coffee and then just bring your own personal cup from some café somewhere, right?

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** If you need coffee while you are there, you can always bring a personal cup with you. But also, I like your idea, right? Of asking if he still has the coffee, if he has a way to make said coffee, and saying, "I can bring my gadgets to use to make this coffee for everyone." Right? Also, if you want to get rid of one of your coffee gadgets, you could donate it to the cause, right? And you could say, "I know that you didn't have any way to make the wonderful coffee that I brought last time."

**Travis:** I would not say it that way.

**Teresa:** Oh, okay.

**Travis:** I wouldn't say, "The very thoughtful, wonderful gift I brought—"

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** "That you weren't able to use..."

**Teresa:** "I know that you didn't have any way to make the coffee I brought, let me bring you something else, so that you can enjoy the coffee—we can enjoy the coffee together." Right?

**Travis:** Yes. Because I could see where it's like, "I don't want to make them feel bad, I don't want to—" Whatever. But you brought coffee last time.

**Teresa:** Yeah.

**Travis:** But didn't have a way to make it. So, that is out there already.

**Teresa:** Mm-hm.

**Travis:** Right? Like, unless that was not addressed in any way and you just sat the bag on the counter and walked away, right? Like the fact that you brought coffee and then they didn't have a way to make it—

**Teresa:** Right.

**Travis:** Is out there, right? So, it's not like you have to break the ice on the subject, right? Just say like, "Hey, if I bring coffee again, will there be a way to make it? Because I can bring something—" Like you said, like it's—

**Teresa:** Right.

**Travis:** It's not new ground.

**Teresa:** And—*he-he-he*.

**Travis:** Thank you.

**Teresa:** And it would seem then that this brother doesn't actually drink coffee? If they don't have any way to prepare it, right? Maybe they just don't drink coffee and you can couch this as kind of like, "Can I keep a stash of coffee accoutrement at your place, since I'm there so often?" I think that this is something that good hosts do for other people. For example, our babysitter, Robin, she keeps a drawer of kid snacks at her house for when we bring our children over, she has things to give them. She doesn't eat the like... I don't know what she has, like goldfish or whatever, right? She doesn't eat that stuff.

**Travis:** I mean, maybe! She gets hungry enough—

**Teresa:** [chuckles]

**Travis:** [There's no snacks in there??]? We've all been there.

**Teresa:** But she keeps it for our children, and that's a common host thing to do. And I think that you could also frame it like that.

**Travis:** I bet that if you were to bring this up with your brother in a direct manner, he would be like, "Oh, okay. I was so confused why you brought me coffee!"

**Teresa:** [chuckles] "Because I don't drink—"

**Travis:** "I don't drink coffee! It was weird! Okay, I'm so glad you said something." Speaking of saying something, how about a word from another Max Fun show?

**Teresa:** All right.

[theme music plays]

[an airplane intercom chimes]

**John:** This is John Hodgman and Janet Varney, coming to you from the flight deck. Please be comfortable, we have now reached our cruising altitude.

**Janet:** Oh, that's correct. You are now free to listen to the latest season of E Pluribus Motto. As always, this season will discuss the official models of US states and territories for your enjoyment.

**John:** If you look out the window, you'll see local iconography and creatures of all sorts that'll be discussed this season, including California quails.

**Janet:** Puerto Rican frogs.

**John:** North Dakota horses.

**Janet:** Spiders of New Hampshire.

**John:** And all matter of official and unofficial state critters.

[an airplane intercom chimes]

**John:** I've now turned on the enjoyment sign. So, please start enjoying new episodes of E Pluribus Motto, every other week on Maximum Fun, and wherever you get your podcasts.

**Janet:** Sit back, relax and enjoy your listen.

[break]

**Advertisement:** Saginaw, Michigan; Galveston, Texas; Albany, New York; the Twin Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul; and Muncie, Indiana. We've just added these cities to the growing list of meetups on April 23rd, for Max Fun Meetup Day. Didn't hear your city or don't know where your local meetup is? Head to [maximumfun.org/meetup](http://maximumfun.org/meetup), and we've got all the details there.

And if you still don't see your city listed, host your own. Find somewhere, a park, library, café, bar, any public space a small group can hang, then fill out the form at [maximumfun.org/meetup](http://maximumfun.org/meetup), and we'll add you to the page so other folks in your area can find you. That's [maximumfun.org/meetup](http://maximumfun.org/meetup). Hope to see you on April 23rd.

[break]

**Travis:** We're back.

**Teresa:** Mm-hm. And here's another question, from Annie M. "My cousin is getting married this summer." Yay! "And I'm in her wedding party." Yay! "And she sent an array of color options that we can pick for dresses." Yay!

**Travis:** It's a trap!

**Teresa:** This is how I did it. I really support this option. "There's just one problem. Out of the colors that she generously gave us for options, exactly none of them look good on me."

**Travis:** I knew it.

**Teresa:** Aw.

**Travis:** I said it. I said it's a trap.

**Teresa:** "They're very light shades of pink, green, orange and lilac-y purple that somehow all wash me out to the point where I look like a sickly Victorian child."

**Travis:** Mm-hm.

**Teresa:** "I don't want to be a complainer. After all, it's her wedding. But I also don't want to be in the photos looking like I don't have long for this world. Help."

**Travis:** I think that this is, first of all, kind of a read the situation kind of thing.

**Teresa:** Mm-hm.

**Travis:** Where, hey, let's just face it, there's different kinds of people who approach weddings in different ways, you know? And is your cousin the type of person that if you're like, "Hey, can we do something different?" That they're like, "Yeah, man, like I want you to be comfortable, it's fine." Are they the type of person that's like, "Oh, I have this image in my head of how it's going to be! And I want it to be exactly that!" Right? Like, that—gauge that, and that's going to give you kind of a starting place. But I think if it were me, right? And you were reaching out to me and you're like, "These don't look good on me. Here as a shade in this same kind of family, but a little bit darker, that I think would look good on me. Would this still fit the vibe?"

**Teresa:** Yeah.

**Travis:** Right? I would appreciate you saying that, rather than finding out later that you wore a dress in a color that you weren't comfortable with and didn't like how you looked, and didn't think it was your best, or whatever, and didn't feel comfortable telling me.

**Teresa:** Yeah. I definitely agree with that one. I also think that there are some avenues that we can go down both ways, right?

**Travis:** A two-way street, if you will.

**Teresa:** Yeah. So, I think that if it is very important to the bride that these exact colors be used, I think accessories and makeup can really help with this.

**Travis:** A jaunty hat at a fun angle.

**Teresa:** Well, you want—

**Travis:** A little—what's that called? A fascinator, you know? A tiny hat.

**Teresa:** That I think would pull more focus.

**Travis:** And a big wig, like you're in the Hunger Games, like you live in the Capitol.

**Teresa:** But I think what you could do, ignoring that—

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** I think what you could do is you can add maybe a thin chiffon scarf, something that's not too bulky, right? But close to your face, in a more flattering, but similar color, right? You can change the makeup look, does a little bronzer help you maybe? Or if you have—maybe it's something that like clashes with your lips or whatever, can you maybe like use a different lip shade that you normally do? There's also—

**Travis:** A fun mask!

**Teresa:** No.

**Travis:** No. Okay.

**Teresa:** You can also, if you get some—

**Travis:** Like you're a plague doctor!

**Teresa:** Excuse me, sir.

**Travis:** Yes, sorry. Was that allowed?

**Teresa:** Back—

**Travis:** Oh, no.

**Teresa:** Back to—back to the focus here.

**Travis:** Sorry, yeah, sorry. Huh? Yeah. In the moment. Mindful. Present.

**Teresa:** You can also get a large earring, right? Maybe that—

**Travis:** Two! Right.

**Teresa:** Two. [chuckles] Two. Two large earrings.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Teresa:** Stop it! [chuckles]

**Travis:** You said it?! I don't know if you're going for a pirate look? A parrot! To distract from the dress.

**Teresa:** You can get a pair of large earrings that will, again, bring attention closer to your face, maybe in your better color palette, right?

**Travis:** I think with all of those things though, check with the bride first, right?

**Teresa:** Yes.

**Travis:** Like because you won't want to show up, you know, with a chiffon scarf. You're the only one with a chiffon scarf and it's like, "Okay, take that off. It doesn't match everyone else." I think that options make everybody feel better, especially the—like they sent out color options to you, right?

Instead of just saying one thing. And if you're like, "I don't know if this goes well with my skin tone. Here's a color I could wear, or—"

**Teresa:** Yes.

**Travis:** "There are accessories I could put with it. Whichever way you want to go."

**Teresa:** I think that if you're able to convince the bride to let you go down a slightly different avenue with a slightly different color, I think that if you present them with, "Here are the colors that look good on me that are very close to the ones that you like. Here's the dress that I was thinking of." You know, not making it really like their problem anymore I think is the best way to go. And be like, "Hey, these are my options. Which one do you want from that? Because this is what happens when I wear your colors." Right?

**Travis:** Yes.

**Teresa:** And I think that if you really need to talk to the bride about this, frame it in, "Hey, I really want these pictures to look great for you down the road. And I'm thinking that these colors, although beautiful, will not look good on me and won't look good in the pictures on me."

**Travis:** Yes.

**Teresa:** "So, let's find a way to make your memories of the day more beautiful." Right?

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Teresa:** All right. This is from Katie Q. "I have a very lovely downstairs neighbor who I chat with in the halls or help with her trash sometimes. It's common for us to update each other on our lives and be honest—and to be honest, I've been going through it lately. I mentioned to her last week that I was having a bit of a bad day, and with all the earnestness in her heart, she replied, 'Oh, honey, I'll pray for you.'

Shmanners, I am the most atheist atheist that has ever atheist. I'm not about to get on an anti-religion soapbox in front of my well-meaning old lady friend, but it got me thinking, what is the correct response when someone offers to pray for you, but you are 100% not religious in any way?"

**Travis:** So, I was raised Southern Baptist.

**Teresa:** Okay.

**Travis:** Right? I am not Southern Baptist anymore. I can't remember the last time I like stepped foot in a church that wasn't like Teresa's mom singing on Christmas Eve, right?

**Teresa:** Right, yeah.

**Travis:** The last time that I was like, "I'm going to church." Eh... The thing is when someone says, "I'll pray for you," I have like an automatic filter in my head that says like, "I'll be thinking about you," right? Or "I hope for the best for you."

**Teresa:** Mm-hm.

**Travis:** Right? But like in their language, they say "prayer."

**Teresa:** Right.

**Travis:** Instead of "hope" or "think," right?

**Teresa:** Or "sending good vibes," or whatever, right?

**Travis:** But for me, I just hear it the same way, right? Of just like, cool, man, you've imbued that with what you think it means.

**Teresa:** Mm-hm.

**Travis:** But I know that for me it's your way of saying like, "I'll be thinking about you" or like "sending you positive vibes," or whatever, right?

**Teresa:** And it doesn't sound like this was weaponized in any way. In the same way that, you know, you can weaponize like "bless your heart" or whatever, right?

**Travis:** And I think it would be a different vibe if she had said like, "Have you tried praying on it?"

**Teresa:** Mm-hm.

**Travis:** Right? And you're like, "That isn't my thing."

**Teresa:** Right.

**Travis:** Right? Like that I think is a different thing where you address—you can address it a little more directly and say like, "That's not really something I do or believe," whatever. But just saying like "I'll be praying for you" is the same as like—to your point, right? Like if I sneeze and someone says, "God bless you," I'm not taking that as like a sincere statement of their faith, right?

**Teresa:** Sure.

**Travis:** Not to say that this wasn't, but it's the same thing of like, "Oh, okay, thank you." Right?

**Teresa:** Yeah!

**Travis:** Like, "Ah, thank you." And just leave it at that.

**Teresa:** Absolutely. "Thank you for thinking of me." Right? Because that will help them feel like they are, you know, expressing to you that they hope for the best for you. And then it will make you feel better to be like, "I don't have to say that I'll pray for you too," or anything like that, right?

**Travis:** Yeah. "And also with you."

[both chuckle]

**Travis:** It's kind of like when you're going to see a movie and you buy some of the concessions and they're like, "Enjoy your movie."

**Teresa:** You too. [chuckles]

**Travis:** And you're like, you—*ah!*

**Teresa:** Ah, no! Right? And I think that you're always allowed to just say thank you, right? And especially with this circumstance where you know this person and you're cultivating this relationship, I don't think you have to explain yourself one bit.

**Travis:** This is the thing that, once again, we talk about a lot, right? Which is deciding your investment level—

**Teresa:** Right.

**Travis:** Of this, right? Because if you start to get the vibe that this is the type of person that if you were to say, "That's not really something I believe in," they are going to make it their life mission to convert you to their way of thinking, no matter what you say or boundaries you put up. That is a perfectly reasonable thing to be like, "And so, I've decided our interactions are now done."

**Teresa:** Yeah.

**Travis:** Right? Perfectly fine. If it's like, oh, it's their own personal thing that they don't try to, as you say, weaponize or force on other people. So like, if that's their thing, I've got my thing, and we can continue to interact with each other, great. That's a decision you get to make as well.

**Teresa:** Yeah. Agreed. All right. This is from Rosie D.

**Travis:** Hi, Rosie.

**Teresa:** "I've recently started nude modeling for my drawing classes at a local college, and I love it a lot. The only thing is there's one particular teacher who doesn't seem very good with keeping time. The way modeling

for classes like this usually works is you sit still for 20-to-40-minute increments of—"

**Travis:** That's too wide of a span! 20 to 40?

**Teresa:** "Of a two- or three-hour class. This gives me plenty of time to have short breaks, shake it out, put on my robes, stretch my legs. But this professor will sometimes have me up there for an hour, which I do believe is too long."

**Travis:** Yes!

**Teresa:** "She's not mean about it. I think she just gets into the class and forgets that I'd like the chance to switch poses or put my arms down. I like this job, but staying still for that long is making my joints hurt—"

**Travis:** The idea of it makes my joints hurt!

**Teresa:** Mm-hm. "Is there a way that I can still be professional without risking my entire lower half falling asleep on the podium?"

**Travis:** First of all, my ADHD brain, 20 to 40, somewhere in there? Too much!

**Teresa:** But what if—what if this question asker—

**Travis:** Because I hear that and I'm like, is it 22 or 38? That's a huge gap!

**Teresa:** But what if it's—

**Travis:** Nail it down! 30 minutes!

**Teresa:** [chuckles] I think that what they mean is about half an hour, give or take.

**Travis:** That's too much give or take! You can give or take two minutes! You can't give or take 20 minutes? Too much! I don't even know what that

means! You might as well say, "I'm going to throw a dart, and if it hits the clock, you get to stop." Bleh! Sorry, it made me uncomfortable.

**Teresa:** Well, as it turns out, according to Alexx's research, this is a very common problem in these types of classes. Many people online have said that this is something that they encounter, where the teachers, although, you know, go with the best intentions of giving the models breaks, it just gets, you know, time gets away from them.

**Travis:** Mm-hm.

**Teresa:** Right? And so, there is nothing unprofessional about setting a timer for yourself. If you're only supposed to be in that position for 20 minutes, right? If that is what the expectation is, you can set that timer and hit the countdown as you pose.

**Travis:** I think that it's perfectly reasonable to say to the teacher like, "Hey, if I stay in one pose too long, I start to cramp up, so I'm going to set a timer like on my phone. Is it okay if I leave it on your desk or next to the stool or whatever you're doing? And when it goes off, I'll change." Right? Like, then you're not saying like, "Hey, you keep forgetting to tell me."

**Teresa:** Exactly.

**Travis:** You're saying, "This is what I need, so this is what I'm going to do. Because I want to give you my best work." Or whatever.

**Teresa:** Mm-hm.

**Travis:** "I want to give you new poses and everything. So, this is my plan for it."

**Teresa:** Right. And I think that it's important that you frame it as a discussion like that and being like, "I know that we've talked about you want three poses for the hour. Let's divide that into 20-minute increments. I'll set this timer so that I can change the pose, or stretch or get a drink or whatever I need. And then we'll restart it when it's time to resume the class." Perfect.

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Teresa:** And like I said, this is a very common problem, according to Alexx's research. So, this is something that is an industry standard, and you can get behind that and feel confident in it.

**Travis:** Do you think—this is something I always want to do when I get a massage, where like I know that the point of it is supposed to be like you're zoned out, right? You go face down on the thing. But as I've said, this is a huge shock for everyone, I know, I have ADHD.

**Teresa:** [chuckles]

**Travis:** And my brain will start to be— "I wonder how long I've been here. Has it been 10 minutes, 15, 30? How much longer is left? What time is it? Where am I? What's happening?!" Would it be rude for me to be like, I'm going to put my phone on the floor underneath the head hole, that's going to say the time. So I can just occasionally open my eyes and be like, 42 minutes, okay, great. And just zoom back out.

**Teresa:** Hm. You know, I think that that would pose a hazard, because those rooms are often quite dark. And so, I think that your phone might get kicked around.

**Travis:** What if I just ask them call out every five minutes.

**Teresa:** [chuckles]

**Travis:** Like an old timey watchman who's just like, [yells out] "3:05 and all is well!"

**Teresa:** I think that you can ask them, "Hey, can you let me know when we're halfway through?"

**Travis:** That's smart. Man, you're smart! Smart and pretty? How'd I get so lucky?

**Teresa:** Aw, thanks.

**Travis:** Hey, everybody, thank you so much for being here. Thank you to our researcher, Alexx, without whom we could not do the show. Thank you to our editors, Rachel and Gino, without whom we could not do the show. And thank you for listening, especially on these Ask Shmanners ones, we literally couldn't do it without you! Because we'd be like "any questions" to an empty room.

**Teresa:** [chuckles]

**Travis:** And it's not a call-in show, so it wouldn't work.

**Teresa:** You could ask your plants if they have—

**Travis:** Yeah. Hey, fish?! Anything you want to know? What else, Teresa?

**Teresa:** Well, we always thank Brent 'brentalfloss' Black for writing our theme music, which is available as a ringtone where those are found. We also thank 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.

**Travis:** And that's going to do it for us, so join us again—oh?

**Teresa:** I want to send out the call one more time. If you have a question for us, askshmanners@gmail.com, right?

**Travis:** [chuckles]

**Travis:** Shmannerscast@gmail.com.

**Teresa:** That's what it is, not Ask Shmanners.

**Travis:** No, but put "Ask Shmanners" in the subject line.

**Teresa:** Yes.

**Travis:** So, shmannerscast@gmail.com, with "Ask Shmanners" in the subject line, and say hi to Alexx, because she reads everyone.

**Teresa:** That's right.

**Travis:** Yeah. And that's going to 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?

["Shmanners Theme" by brentalfloss plays]

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