



B.O.H. BEGINNING TRAINING WORKBOOK

Beginner Edition

Where Kitchen Culture Starts

3C Squared

Care * Connection * Culture

THE 3COS FRAMEWORK

CARE

CONNECTION

CULTURE

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Welcome

I have spent more than 40 years in this industry — starting in a cottage bakery, working my way through fine dining kitchens, catering operations serving thousands of guests, and every kind of restaurant in between. In all of that time, I watched operators reach for the same fix whenever something felt broken: more training. A new checklist. A binder of service standards. A laminated procedure card posted at every station.

Those aren't bad ideas. I've written plenty of them myself.

But I kept seeing the same pattern. Six months later, the problems came back. Turnover crept up again. Standards slipped. The training worked for a week — sometimes a month — and then it didn't. That's because training teaches behavior. It doesn't build the environment that makes the behavior stick.

Anthony Bourdain said it plainly: "Everything important I learned, I learned as a dishwasher." He started in a Cape Cod restaurant at 18, scrubbing plates during summer breaks. He described it as the first time in his life he went home respecting himself — because the work demanded that he show up on time, stay organized, and care about the people around him. That discipline became the foundation for everything that followed.

Most people don't write workbooks for dishwashers. That's exactly the problem — and it's exactly why this one exists.

[INSIGHT]

The restaurant you work in will be better because you were there. That's the goal. Let's get to work.

— Michelle Myers, Founder, 3C Squared, LLC

SECTION 1: Why the Dish Pit Is the Most Important Room in the Restaurant

Everything in a restaurant runs through the dishwasher, whether anyone upstairs realizes it or not. The line cook needs a clean pan before the next ticket fires. The server needs a clean plate before the next table sits. The bartender needs a clean glass before the next order rings in. None of it works without the dish pit keeping pace — and none of it is visible until it stops.

Picture this: it's the middle of a Friday dinner rush, and the plates run out. The chef is stuck — there is nowhere to put the next plate of food, so the ticket sits, and the ticket behind it sits too. The expo, whose entire job is keeping the pass moving, is now improvising — hunting for anything clean, apologizing to the line for a delay that isn't the line's fault. The server, who has no idea what's happening in the back, gets asked by table 14 why their food hasn't come yet, and has nothing honest to say. The guest, who came in for a nice night out, starts checking their phone. Nobody in that chain caused the problem. It started in the dish pit, and it ends at the table.

Thomas Keller — the chef behind the French Laundry and Per Se, the only American-born chef to hold three Michelin stars at two different restaurants simultaneously — started as a dishwasher at the Palm Beach Yacht Club as a teenager. He has said that what he learned in that role became the foundation for everything he built. Not the culinary school. Not the apprenticeships in France. The dish pit. Because without clean plates, no chef can serve anything.

"What I learned in the dish pit became the foundation for everything I built."

-- Thomas Keller, The French Laundry & Per Se — 3 Michelin Stars

[INSIGHT]

The best chefs in the world started here. Not because they had no choice — because they were paying attention.

REFLECTION

Write about a shift where things went wrong in the kitchen. Where did the breakdown actually start?

WORKSHEET: My Station Standard

	What 10/10 looks like	Where I am today
Cleanliness		
Organization		
Speed		
Communication with chef/line		
Stocking		
Energy		



SECTION 2: Care — Seeing What Others Walk Past

You may not be responsible for the parking lot. It's not in your job description, not on your station checklist, and no one will write you up if a piece of trash blows across it. But the people who get noticed — the ones who move up, the ones a chef trusts — are the ones who see that piece of trash and pick it up anyway. Nobody assigned it to them. They just did it because it needed doing.

There's a real difference between doing the job and owning the space. Doing the job means you wash what's put in front of you and wait for the next thing. Owning the space means you're already restocking before anyone notices you're low, wiping down the corner that isn't technically dirty yet, keeping half a step ahead of the shift instead of reacting to it. That's not extra effort for its own sake — it's pride in your station.

In 2016, the chef Rene Redzepi — whose Copenhagen restaurant Noma was named the best restaurant in the world multiple times — made his dishwasher a co-owner. Ali Sonko had worked at Noma for 14 years, quietly, reliably, showing up every shift with the same care and consistency whether anyone was watching or not. Redzepi said the decision was simple: the work Ali did made everything else possible. It deserved to be recognized the same way a chef's work would be.

"Everything important I learned, I learned as a dishwasher."

-- Anthony Bourdain

[INSIGHT]

Caring about things that aren't technically yours is what separates people who get noticed from people who get overlooked.

REFLECTION

List 3 things in your workplace you notice but don't feel responsible for. What would happen if you addressed just one of them today?

WORKSHEET: My Care Inventory (Rate 1 = rarely to 5 = consistently)

Item	1	2	3	4	5
I clean as I go, not just at the end of the shift	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I restock supplies without being asked	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I notice things that are out of place	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I arrive ready to work, not just present	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I treat equipment and tools with respect	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I keep my station organized even during a rush	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I follow food safety procedures consistently, not just when someone's watching	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I take initiative before being told what to do	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I finish tasks completely instead of leaving them half-done	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I take pride in my work even when no one comments on it	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐



SECTION 3: Connection — How Your Energy Moves Through the Kitchen

The dish pit sits at the emotional center of the kitchen, even though it rarely gets talked about that way. It's often the most pressured spot in the building — the heat, the noise, the constant incoming wave of dishes that never fully stops during a rush. That pressure has to go somewhere. It either gets absorbed, or it gets passed along.

When you're frustrated, panicked, or checked out, the whole line feels it. Cooks glance over, notice the pile-up, and start tensing up themselves. When you're steady — even when it's slammed — the kitchen is calmer. Your composure becomes contagious in the best way. That is not a personality trait some people are born with. It's a choice you make, shift after shift.

The best-run kitchens practice something called Full Hands In, Full Hands Out. The principle is simple: never walk toward the back with empty hands. Every trip to the kitchen, pick something up that belongs there. Every trip back out, take something that needs to reach the line. It sounds like logistics. What it actually creates is a team that is connected to the whole operation at all times — not just their own station. The dish pit is the engine of that system.

"Your energy is not contained to your station. It travels. Make sure it's worth sending."

-- Michelle Myers, Founder, 3C Squared

[INSIGHT]

Your energy is not contained to your station. It travels. Make sure it's worth sending.

REFLECTION

Think of a coworker whose energy changed the whole room — for better or worse. What exactly did they do? What did it feel like to work alongside them?

WORKSHEET: My Communication Habits

Question	YES	SOMETIMES	NO
Do I alert the chef when we're running low on plates, glasses, or silverware?	☐	☐	☐
Do I communicate proactively when I'm falling behind?	☐	☐	☐
Do I acknowledge my teammates during service, even nonverbally?	☐	☐	☐
Do I help FOH staff without attitude when they need something?	☐	☐	☐
Do I keep frustration out of my body language during a rush?	☐	☐	☐
Do I say "I've got it" before someone has to ask for help?	☐	☐	☐
Do I know the names of the people I work alongside?	☐	☐	☐
Do I leave personal stress outside the kitchen during my shift?	☐	☐	☐

SECTION 4: Culture — Being the Standard When No One Is Watching

Culture is not what happens when the chef is in the kitchen. It's what happens when they're not. Anyone can hold a standard under supervision. The real measure of a kitchen's culture — and your place in it — is what happens in the fifteen minutes when the chef steps into the walk-in, or leaves early, or is buried in a phone call in the office.

Here's a simple test: would you behave differently if the owner walked in right now? If the honest answer is yes, that gap between how you act when watched and how you act when you're not is exactly the thing to close. It's the clearest signal of where your standards actually sit.

Real culture gets built through daily habits — not through a speech or a poster. It gets built when someone wipes down the corner that isn't technically dirty yet. When someone picks up the piece of trash in the parking lot on the way in. When someone helps without being asked on a Tuesday afternoon that nobody important is watching. That's not an occasional favor. That's a career philosophy.

"Culture is not a poster on the wall. It's what happens when no one is watching."

-- Michelle Myers, Founder, 3C Squared

[INSIGHT]

Culture is not a poster on the wall. It's what happens when no one is watching — and you are part of building it every single shift.

REFLECTION

Describe the culture of your current kitchen in 3 words. Are those the words you want defining your career?

WORKSHEET: The Consistency Check (Fill both columns honestly, then identify the gap)

	When the chef is watching	When they're not
Speed		
Cleanliness		
Attitude		
Communication		
Care for equipment		

SECTION 5: The Fingerprint — How the Dish Pit Touches Every Guest

There's an invisible chain that runs from your station to the guest's table. Most guests will never think about it. They'll just experience the result — good or bad.

A plate that isn't properly cleaned. A glass with a water spot. Flatware that still smells faintly like the machine. Guests notice these things even when they can't name exactly what's wrong. They just quietly decide not to come back, and they rarely say why. The entryway they walked through, the restroom they used, the table that was reset for them — all of it connects back to systems that live in the back of house, and many of them start at your station.

Research consistently shows that 70 to 77 percent of first-time restaurant guests never return. When those guests were asked why, the food was rarely the reason. It was the feeling. The glass that looked off. The small details that added up to a sense that no one was paying attention. Most of those details trace back to the back of house — and many of them start at your station.

"You never see the guest. The guest never sees you. But they feel your work on every single table."

-- Michelle Myers, Founder, 3C Squared

[INSIGHT]

You never see the guest. The guest never sees you. But they feel your work on every single table.

REFLECTION

Name one thing the guest experiences that you directly make possible. Sit with that for a minute.

WORKSHEET: The Chain (At each step: what do you contribute, and what breaks down without you?)

Dish Pit	Line	Plate	Server	Guest
What do I contribute?	What do I contribute?	What do I contribute?	What do I contribute?	What do I contribute?
What breaks down without me?	What breaks down without me?	What breaks down without me?	What breaks down without me?	What breaks down without me?

SECTION 6: The Career Path — Where Attention Takes You

Most great chefs, sous chefs, and kitchen managers started exactly where you are right now. That's not a motivational line — it's simply how this industry has always worked. Anthony Bourdain started here. Thomas Keller started here. Chef Ron Duprat — who became a celebrity chef and Worldchefs ambassador — started here and has said the dish pit taught him that every role in a kitchen is vital. Eric Raty walked into a two-Michelin-star restaurant in Finland looking for any open position, took the dishwasher job, watched what was happening around him every single shift, and eventually led a restaurant in Hong Kong to two Michelin stars of his own.

Three habits get noticed faster than almost anything else: showing up on time and ready to work; finishing tasks before being asked; and becoming someone other people can genuinely count on when things get hard. None of these require culinary school. All of them are visible within the first few weeks of working alongside someone.

The right question isn't "can I help?" It's specific: "I noticed the prep station is behind — can I start on the onions?" That single sentence shows initiative, observation, and respect for the other person's time all at once. It's a small shift in language that says a great deal about how you see your role.

"The people who move up are not always the most talented. They are the most attentive. Be the person who notices."

-- Michelle Myers, Founder, 3C Squared

[INSIGHT]

The people who move up are not always the most talented. They are the most attentive. Be the person who notices.

REFLECTION

Where do you want to be in this industry in 2 years? What would that version of you know that you don't know yet?

WORKSHEET: My 90-Day Intention

What I want to learn	Who I'll ask or watch	How I'll practice it

SECTION 7: The 3COS Self-Assessment

Rate yourself honestly — 1 (rarely) to 5 (consistently). This is for you, not your manager.

CARE					
Statement	1	2	3	4	5
I take pride in my station even on slow nights	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I notice things that need attention before being told	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I arrive physically and mentally ready to work	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I treat equipment and tools as if I own them	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I maintain my station throughout the shift, not just at open and close	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I take pride in what leaves this kitchen even if I never see the guest	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I notice what the people around me need before they ask	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

CARE TOTAL: _____ / 35

CONNECTION					
Statement	1	2	3	4	5
I communicate proactively when I'm falling behind	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I acknowledge my coworkers during service (verbally or a nod)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I offer help to other stations when I have capacity	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I know the names of the people I work alongside	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I leave personal stress outside the kitchen during service	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I give a heads-up when something is running low	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I treat FOH staff with the same respect I'd give a chef	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

CONNECTION TOTAL: _____ / 35

CULTURE					
Statement	1	2	3	4	5
I behave the same whether or not a manager is watching	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I speak positively — or not at all — about my workplace to coworkers	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I address something I notice even when it's not my responsibility	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I am someone my coworkers genuinely want to work with	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My standards on a Friday rush are the same as a Tuesday afternoon	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I contribute to the overall energy of the kitchen	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

CULTURE TOTAL: _____ / 30 OVERALL TOTAL: _____ / 100

SCORING**85-100**

You are a culture carrier. Lead by example and bring others with you.

65-84

Solid foundation. Identify your lowest pillar and focus there.

Below 65

Pick one area this week. One shift at a time.

REFLECTION

Which pillar scored lowest? What is one specific thing you will do differently starting your next shift?

SECTION 8: A Note on the Industry

The restaurant industry is one of the only industries where there is almost no expectation of formal development for the people who are most visible in the building. Operators will invest \$80,000 in a POS system and nothing in helping a dishwasher understand how much their work matters. That's not cruelty — it's a blind spot baked into how the industry has operated for decades.

It's changing. Slowly. And the people who are going to change it are the ones reading workbooks like this one.

I built the 3COS Framework after 40 years of watching restaurants train their people to follow procedure and still lose them within six months. Training teaches behavior. It doesn't build the environment that makes the behavior stick. Fear-based management gets compliance for a shift. It never gets loyalty. It never builds a team that solves problems when no one is watching.

The 3COS Framework — Care, Connection, Culture — is not a corporate program. It's a description of what great restaurant people already do. This workbook just names it so you can do it on purpose.

The restaurant you work in will be better because you were there. Go make that true.

"There is no requirement in this industry to learn, to grow. That is exactly why the people who choose to — stand out immediately."

-- Michelle Myers, Founder, 3C Squared

— Michelle Myers, Founder, 3C Squared, LLC

SECTION 9: My Commitments + Next Steps

Starting my next shift, I will...

One person on my team I will acknowledge this week:

One thing I noticed this week that wasn't my responsibility — and what I did about it:

THE 3COS PLEDGE

I commit to showing up with Care — for my station, my team, and every plate that leaves this kitchen.

I commit to Connection — to acknowledge the people around me and communicate before problems grow.

I commit to Culture — to be the same person whether or not anyone is watching, and to help build a kitchen I am proud to work in.

Signature

Date

Learn more at 3csquared.com | michelle@3csquared.com | Colorado, USA