



F.O.H. BEGINNERS TRAINING WORKBOOK

Beginner Edition

Where Hospitality Becomes a Practice

3C Squared

Care * Connection * Culture

THE 3COS FRAMEWORK

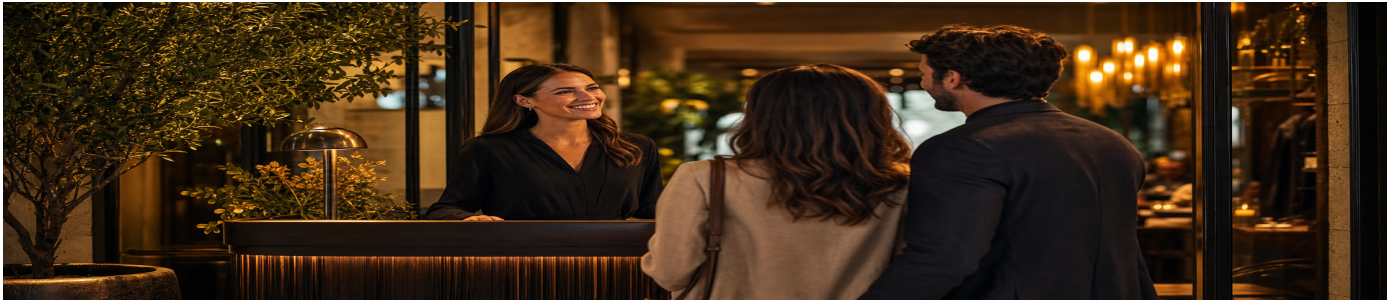
CARE

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 rooms, catering operations serving thousands of guests, and every kind of restaurant in between. In all of that time, the front of house was where the story got told. It's where the guest decided whether they were coming back. And it's where I watched more potential go unrealized than anywhere else in the building.

Research consistently shows that 70 to 77 percent of first-time restaurant guests never return for a second visit. When those guests were surveyed about why, the food was rarely the reason. What they remembered — the thing that made them decide not to come back — was how they felt. Ignored. Unacknowledged. Like an interruption instead of the whole point.

Most operators try to fix that with scripts. With checklists. With laminated table steps that get recited and forgotten within a week. Those aren't bad tools — I've written plenty of them myself. But they treat hospitality like a procedure, and hospitality is not a procedure. It's a practice.

This workbook is built on the 3COS Framework — Care, Connection, and Culture. The same three pillars I've used with restaurants across the country to build FOH teams that guests actually remember. Not because they followed the right steps in the right order — but because they made people feel something. Seen. Welcome. Taken care of.

[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 Front of House Is the Face of Everything

Every guest who walks through your door made a decision to be there. They chose this restaurant over every other option they had tonight — delivery, cooking at home, the place down the street. They had an expectation when they walked in, even if they couldn't put it into words. Your job starts the second they cross the threshold. Not when you get to their table. Right then.

The first thing a guest sees is not the food. It's the front. Is it clean? Is the entrance clear? Is someone there who looks like they belong — present, ready, facing the door? That 10-second impression is yours to set. A tidy, attended front signals to the guest that the whole operation is run with care. A cluttered entrance, an absent host, a staff member absorbed in a phone screen — those signal exactly the opposite. The guest hasn't sat down yet, and they're already forming an opinion.

There is a real difference between service and hospitality. Will Guidara, who built Eleven Madison Park into the number-one restaurant in the world, described it this way: service is the checklist. Hospitality is the emotional aftertaste of the service you just delivered. It's not what you did — it's how you made them feel while you were doing it. You can execute every step correctly and still fail at hospitality. But if you genuinely make someone feel seen, they will forgive almost anything else.

"Hospitality is the emotional aftertaste of the service you just delivered."

-- Will Guidara, Eleven Madison Park — #1 Restaurant in the World

[INSIGHT]

Service delivers what was ordered. Hospitality makes people glad they came. You are in the hospitality business.

REFLECTION

Think of a time you were a guest somewhere and felt genuinely taken care of. What did that person do specifically? What would you remember about them a week later?

WORKSHEET: My Hospitality Standard

	What excellent looks like	Where I am today
Greeting a new table		
Reading the table's energy		
Handling a wait		
Responding to a problem		
The close of the experience		
My presence when the section is full		

SECTION 2: Care — Seeing the Guest Before They Ask

Care in the front of house is not the same as being nice. Nice is a personality trait. Care is a practice — a set of habits that you build through deliberate attention, shift after shift. Nice people smile when they arrive. Care is what notices the water glass is half empty before the guest looks around for someone.

Here is what care looks like when it's missing: a New York City restaurant once pulled old surveillance footage and compared it side by side with footage from the present day. Same location, same layout, same menu prices. What they discovered was that the average table time had jumped from 65 minutes to over 100 — not because guests were ordering more, but because servers were constantly stopping to check personal phones. Guests spent an average of 9 minutes trying to get someone's attention before they could even place an order. By the time the check arrived, the experience was already damaged. The restaurant had no idea it was happening.

A phone in your hand during service is not a neutral act. It signals to every guest in your section that something else is more important than they are right now. When I walk into a restaurant and see a team member on their phone at the front, what I see is a conversation waiting to happen — about care, about connection, and about what it means to actually show up.

"You don't need a bigger section to practice hospitality. You need eyes that are actually open."

-- Michelle Myers, Founder, 3C Squared

[INSIGHT]

The phone can wait. The guest cannot.

REFLECTION

Name 3 things a guest might need that they haven't asked for yet. What would it look like to address each one before they have to?

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

Item	1	2	3	4	5
I notice empty glasses and water levels before the guest looks around	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I greet every table within 60 seconds of them sitting down	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I arrive to my shift mentally present, not just physically there	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I check on tables proactively, not just when called over	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I notice when a guest looks confused or uncomfortable	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I reset my section completely between each turn	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I treat every table as if it's the only table I have	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I take pride in my work even when the shift is slow	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I notice things outside my section that need attention	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I finish every task completely before moving to the next one	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐



SECTION 3: Connection — Making the Guest Feel It

Connection is not a personality type. It's a direction. When everyone on the FOH team is working toward the same common goal — making every guest feel that they matter — the whole room shifts. Guests sense it without being able to name it. The place just feels good. That feeling is not the result of one great server doing their job. It's the result of everyone moving in the same direction at the same time.

There's a principle practiced in some of the best-run restaurants in the country called Full Hands In, Full Hands Out. The rule 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, carry something that needs to reach a table. It sounds like an efficiency tactic, and it is. But it's also something deeper. It's the physical expression of a team that is connected to the whole floor, not just their own section. The guest doesn't experience it as a policy. They experience it as a restaurant that runs like a single, living thing.

The specific language you use matters more than most people realize. "Can I help you?" is passive. "I noticed you've been waiting — let me take care of that right now" is connection. One puts the burden on the guest to direct the interaction. The other takes ownership of it.

"Connection is the goal. When the whole team is working toward making every guest feel it, that's when a restaurant becomes something people talk about."

-- Michelle Myers, Founder, 3C Squared

[INSIGHT]

Connection is the goal. When the whole team is working toward making every guest feel it, that's when a restaurant becomes something people talk about.

REFLECTION

Think of a regular guest you've served more than once. What do you know about them? What would it mean to them if you remembered something specific next time?

WORKSHEET: My Connection Habits

Question	YES	SOMETIMES	NO
Do I make eye contact and acknowledge guests even when I'm busy with another table?	☐	☐	☐
Do I read the table's energy and adjust my approach accordingly?	☐	☐	☐
Do I remember something about a returning guest when I see them again?	☐	☐	☐
Do I step in to help a teammate who is buried without being asked?	☐	☐	☐
Do I use the guest's name when I know it?	☐	☐	☐
Do I introduce myself to new tables and make them feel welcomed?	☐	☐	☐
Do I communicate proactively when there's a delay or a problem?	☐	☐	☐
Do I close interactions warmly rather than just moving on?	☐	☐	☐

SECTION 4: Culture — Being Consistent When No One Is Watching

Culture in the front of house is what the dining room feels like when the manager steps into the office. It's the tone your team sets during side work when no guests are within earshot. It's how you talk about the kitchen, about the regulars, about the people you work with — and whether that conversation is something you'd be comfortable with if the owner were standing behind you.

The visible fingerprint of a restaurant's culture starts before the guest walks in. Is the entrance clean and clear? Is there someone at the door looking up, or is the front area empty and staff clustered somewhere else? Research from Newport Hospitality Group found that behavior ignored is behavior accepted — meaning the standard you tolerate in your environment is the standard your guests experience.

Culture is contagious. One person who is genuinely engaged raises the floor for the whole team. One person who is visibly checked out lowers it. You are always contributing to the culture whether you intend to or not. Fear gets compliance. Care gets commitment.

"Behavior ignored is behavior accepted. The standard you tolerate is the standard your guests experience."

-- Newport Hospitality Group

[INSIGHT]

The standard you hold when the manager steps away is your real standard. Build the culture you want to work in.

REFLECTION

Describe the culture of your current FOH team in 3 words. Are those the words you want defining your professional reputation?

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

	When the manager is watching	When they're not
Greeting quality		
Table presence		
Speed and urgency		
Attitude toward teammates		
Attitude toward BOH		
Appearance and setup		

SECTION 5: The Guest Journey — Every Touchpoint Is Yours

From the moment a guest parks their car to the moment they sign the check, they are forming an impression. Most of those moments happen in the front of house. And most of them happen so fast that the guest doesn't consciously register them — they just feel good or they don't.

At Gramercy Tavern in New York City — one of the country's most respected dining rooms — the host stand operates by a single rule: never let your face be down in a screen when a guest approaches. Look up. Make eye contact. Greet the person before you ask about the reservation. That one choice — to be visibly present — is what separates a front door that makes guests feel welcomed from one that makes them feel processed.

The first 90 seconds determine more about the guest's experience than almost anything that comes after. A warm, unhurried greeting resets the guest's nervous system. They stop scanning the room trying to orient themselves and start to relax. That relaxed guest is more patient, more open to suggestions, more generous with their tip, and more likely to come back.

"The first 90 seconds and the last 30 seconds are what the guest will remember. Own both ends of the experience."

-- Michelle Myers, Founder, 3C Squared

[INSIGHT]

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REFLECTION

Walk through your last shift in your mind. At which touchpoint did you feel most confident? Where did you leave something on the table?

WORKSHEET: The Guest Journey (At each step: what do you do, and what does the guest feel?)

Arrival	Greeting	Order	The Meal	The Close
What I do here	What I do here	What I do here	What I do here	What I do here
What the guest feels	What the guest feels	What the guest feels	What the guest feels	What the guest feels

SECTION 6: The Career Path — Where Consistency Takes You

The front of house is one of the most visible careers in any service industry — and one of the most underestimated as a path to leadership. The servers, hosts, and bussers who move into management, ownership, and training roles are not always the ones who were the most naturally charming or the fastest on the floor. They are the ones who paid attention long enough to understand the whole operation, not just their section.

Three things get noticed faster than anything else: showing up consistently at the same level regardless of who is watching; being someone your teammates actively want to work with; and asking the specific question rather than the vague one. Not "can I do more?" but "I noticed we're running low on linen — do you want me to pull more from the back?" That specificity signals observation, initiative, and respect for the leader's time all at once.

Every shift is a free education in operations, guest psychology, and team dynamics — if you are actually watching. There is no requirement in this industry to learn, to grow, or to read a single book about the business that pays your bills. That is exactly why the people who choose to stand out immediately. You are already doing that by being here.

"The people who move into leadership are not the most naturally talented. They are the most consistent, the most curious, and the most attentive."

-- Michelle Myers, Founder, 3C Squared

[INSIGHT]

The people who move into leadership are not the most naturally talented. They are the most consistent, the most curious, and the most attentive.

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 notice empty glasses and low supplies before being told	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I greet every table within 60 seconds — even when I'm busy	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I arrive to my shift mentally present and prepared	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I take pride in my section appearance throughout the shift	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I reset tables completely and correctly between every turn	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I stay attentive to my section during slow periods, not just rushes	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I notice things outside my section that need attention	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

CARE TOTAL: _____ / 35

CONNECTION					
Statement	1	2	3	4	5
I make eye contact and acknowledge guests even when I'm mid-task	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I read the table's energy and adjust my approach	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I remember something about returning guests	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I introduce myself and make new guests feel genuinely welcomed	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I step in to help a teammate who is buried before being asked	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I communicate proactively when there's a delay or problem	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I close interactions warmly and with presence	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

CONNECTION TOTAL: _____ / 35

CULTURE					
Statement	1	2	3	4	5
I hold the same standard whether or not a manager is watching	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I speak about my teammates, BOH, and guests with respect	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I contribute positively to the team's energy before and during service	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I address something I notice even when it's not my responsibility	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I am someone my teammates genuinely want to work alongside	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My performance on a slow Tuesday matches a busy Friday night	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

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 employs more people than almost any other sector in the country. It is also one of the only industries where the person most visible to the customer — the one who determines whether they come back — receives almost no investment in their professional development. Operators spend tens of thousands of dollars on POS systems and marketing and almost nothing on teaching their FOH team what hospitality actually is.

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 hire great people and then fail to give them a reason to stay. Training teaches behavior. It doesn't build the environment that makes the behavior stick. Fear gets compliance. Care gets commitment.

The FOH teams that hold together are the ones where someone — not necessarily the manager — decided to care about the environment. Where helping without being asked is the norm, not the exception. Where the standard lives in the team, not just in the training binder.

The 3COS Framework — Care, Connection, Culture — is not a corporate program. It's a description of what great hospitality 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 guest I will make feel genuinely seen this week:

One teammate I will step up for without being asked:

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 every guest, every table, and every person I work alongside.

I commit to Connection — to make every guest feel seen, and every teammate feel supported.

I commit to Culture — to hold the same standard whether anyone is watching or not, and to help build a front of house I am proud to be part of.

Signature

Date

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