

MASTERS by Winn Claybaugh, September 2026

Founder of Thirty Percent



Preston Lee is the architect of Thirty Percent, a performance-driven framework built to help restaurants unlock margin, elevate culture, and create measurable operational clarity.

Interviewed by **Winn Claybaugh**, Preston clarifies the difference between service and hospitality. Even when a business provides a wonderful product or service, hospitality goes much deeper. Whether you're a brand-new or seasoned professional, the goal in any business is to attract, hire, and retain the best team to provide exceptional hospitality, which results in customer loyalty and, eventually, increased profitability. Who wouldn't want that?

Winn: Hi everybody, Winn Claybaugh here and welcome to another MASTERS by Winn Claybaugh podcast. I say this a lot recently: this is my 30th year. So, 30 years of being able to share wonderful, incredible people. You know, I am who I am because of my mentors. There's no way I would get out of bed in the morning if I didn't have incredible mentors. And by the way, I'm always on the hunt for new teachers and new mentors and new alliances, and that's exactly what happened as I came across this guy Preston Lee. And so, where do you scroll? You scroll through social media to find these people. And fortunately, I've set up an algorithm that sends me good quality, powerful people and that's how Preston came along in my feed. I kept on watching video after video and I know that you're going to do the same thing. Wait. First of all, Preston, don't you have like, I don't know, 350,000 followers on Instagram or is it more than that?

Preston: A little bit over 420,000.

Winn: But who's counting? Hey, good job, man.

Preston: *[Laughs]*

Winn: You're doing something right. And I know after this, you're going to have a whole lot more because, I'm telling you guys, you could have a whole lesson. You could have a whole training for yourself or for your team just by scrolling and listening to video after video after video that he puts out. His content is amazing. First of all, Preston, thanks for being here. I haven't even welcomed you yet. So, thanks for doing this.

Preston: Thanks for having me. It's a freaking honor. I've told you that a lot of times and I mean it. I'm so excited to be on this podcast and to have another conversation with you, Winn, because we got lunch the other day and it was freaking awesome.

Winn: I agree. I agree. So, let me share with our listeners a bit more information about who Preston is. He is the founder of Thirty Percent, the author of *The Hospitality Handbook*, and his work has reached over 350 hospitality groups and countless leaders and teams internationally for businesses and industries, including restaurants, hotels, private clubs, salons, barbershops, or anything that has a hospitality setting. With over 20 years of experience, Preston Lee is the generational voice of restaurant systems. From the dish pit to scaling—I don't even know what that means. What's the dish pit, Preston?

Preston: Uh, it's the dishwasher.

Winn: Oh, got it.

Preston: Yeah. I was a—

Winn: Can't we just say dishwasher? Why'd you have to do dish pit?

Preston: I think it sounds cooler. It sounds a little bit more rugged, right? Like it's a tough job.

Winn: Okay. Well, I want to sound that way. So, I'll go from there. From the dish pit to scaling \$250 million groups, Preston highly focuses on training, systems and leadership, which we're absolutely going to get into. So, Preston got fired as what he called “an entitled server.” You were an entitled server. Gosh, I've never met those before.

Preston: [Laughs]

Winn: And you hit rock bottom and we're going to talk about your story. And that moment became the turning point for Preston. The transformation came about as Preston walked into a struggling hospitality concept and helped take it from \$500,000 to \$1.2 million, not through menu changes or marketing but by building culture, leadership, and training from the inside out. Preston didn't stop there. He scaled multiple hospitality concepts, making them sound, highly profitable operations, all through the same formula: leadership development, innovation, and clarity. Preston believes that the guest experience is built the same way, through people who are trained, empowered, and led with intention. And I know that maybe a lot of your messaging and your background experience comes in the restaurant business, but hospitality is hospitality, correct?

Preston: A hundred percent. I mean, I always tell people if you're selling to people, if you have a product that you're giving to customers, then hospitality is going to benefit you greatly.

Winn: Okay, so first of all, the name of your company, Thirty Percent. Why that name?

Preston: You know, in the restaurant industry, they always try to budget things and you're supposed to have 30 percent labor. You're really supposed to have, you know, you try to go for like 21 percent labor, 19 percent labor. That's the benchmark. But when you go to a broad spectrum, it's 30 percent, you know. And I always tell people: when you're looking at your business, right, focus on

the 30 percent of things that matter, which is going to be—which I say is your labor, your people, you know? Because we've worked with so many businesses. We've assessed so many businesses. And one thing we always see 95 percent of the time is that the people in their business are severely underdeveloped. Whether it's a cashier, a hostess, a waiter, or a manager, a leader, they're severely underdeveloped. And that just ties your hands behind your back and it makes it not the best work environment for your employees. And so, that's what the Thirty Percent came from, is really trying to get business owners and leaders to focus on their people.

Winn: Okay, perfect. Great start to this. So, what's the difference between hospitality and service? I mean, does distinction really show up in revenue? Hospitality and service.

Preston: So, the difference between hospitality and service is really, you know, I always break it down to people like super simple. Service is a business transaction. That's the business transaction side. So, for example, someone walks into a restaurant, they're walking into your door and they're saying, "I have money," right? "And I want to exchange my money for your product." That's what they're saying when they walk into a restaurant or they walk into a barber shop, whatever it is. A hair salon, right? That's what you're saying. And so, service is saying, "I'm going to complete that transaction for you," right? So, if I'm in a restaurant, I'm going to sit you down, I'm going to give you a menu, I'm going to take your order, answer any questions. If there's a problem, I'll fix it. I'll get you refills. I'll smile really big. I'll make sure you leave happy and you get your product, and then I'll take your money at the end. That's service. Hospitality is how do we take it to the next level? That's where the luxury aspect of it comes in, right? Where do we add value without spending more money, right? Add value, make it a unique experience. So, there's Will Guidara who wrote *Unreasonable Hospitality*, which is arguably one of the best hospitality books in the world and one of the most popular. And he says it like this: hospitality is one for one and service is one for all. So, if I bring waters to the table, right when you sit down so you have something to drink as a part of the experience. And I do it for every table, that's service, right? Hospitality is something different. One for one. That's where I do it for you, right? I'm gonna do it for Winn. Winn sits down, I'm gonna have to ask Winn questions, I'm gonna find out some things about Winn, I'm gonna have to pay attention to Winn's behaviors right at the table to see if I have an opportunity to wow him, which is exceeding the guests' expectations when they least expect it. But what gets confusing is the gesture, right? They think the gesture is the hospitality piece. I'll give you an example. When you go to a restaurant and it's your birthday. You say, "It's my birthday," and they bring you a piece of cake. Is that hospitality, right? It's service because you're doing it for everybody. And the proof is in the pudding because when you go to a restaurant and you say it's your birthday: "Hey, that's nice, they brought me a cake." You're not wowed. You don't go home after that and go, "Oh my gosh, you're not gonna believe this. I went to this restaurant and it was just so mind blowing." Right? That never happens because you're expecting it. In fact, you

- get disappointed when it doesn't happen. So, if it's an expectation, nine times out of ten, it's probably not hospitality. And so, that's why it's so—it's really important for owners and leaders to understand that distinction because it is a fine line, but we can't train into our staff and develop into our staff if we don't fundamentally understand the difference.
- Winn: Okay. And as we go through this, I have a feeling that you're going to really break it down so that people start to really get their heads wrapped around the difference between service, which you said is transactional. And if I have 20 clients in the salon today, that transactional service is pretty much going to be the same for each one of them. Which doesn't mean that it's not a bad experience.
- Preston: Exactly.
- Winn: I greeted them, I smiled, I gave them a great massage at the shampoo bowl, a wonderful consultation. I blew out their hair, I offered them a cup of coffee. So, that's all transactional. And it's service. And what you're saying is hospitality, we gotta go to a whole new level with that.
- Preston: And that's a separator, right? Because you ask, does it end up in your revenue line? Yes, because that's a separator. That's where you build loyalty. That's where you build undying loyalty is when someone feels seen and heard and valued, just like in a relationship. If you're in relationship with someone and they're making you feel seen and valued in that relationship, you become more loyal, you become more dedicated to the relationship. It's the same thing here. And like you said, that doesn't mean that good service, elevated service, right: I'm going to bring someone a birthday dessert on their birthday. I'm going to get them refills without them asking. I'm gonna bring ketchup to the table when they order fries without them asking. That's elevated service and it's definitely necessary and definitely has value, but you're talking about this much value being added with good service and this much value being added with hospitality. Done right. So, for example, “Hey, would you like a cup of coffee?” Right? When you sit down in my salon chair, “Would you like a cup of coffee?” “Yeah, absolutely.” Or next one is, “Hey, by the way, thanks for coming. I remember last time you told me you loved the Mocha Frappuccinos from Starbucks. I just stopped by on the way. I grabbed you one. Hope you don't mind, here you go.” Right?
- Winn: Ahh.
- Preston: They're going to go, “You remembered? Oh my gosh!” Right? Versus, “Oh, thank you for that. Yeah, I would take a cup of coffee. Thank you for this. I appreciate it.” Those are two different things, right? Small difference but big.
- Winn: So, I've heard you say that people don't write bad reviews over overcooked food or their food was cold. **So, why do people write bad reviews?**
- Preston: That's a great question and also, Winn, thank you for watching my content. That means the world. I brag about it, by the way. I've already bragged. But yeah, so this is a big topic, right? Because that's what I tell restauranteurs all

the time. And employees. Employees understand this, right? People don't write a bad review or stop going to a restaurant or stop going to a business because of an interaction, right? So, let's say I get an overcooked steak, my food takes a long time. I go past my reservation. I go and I get a bad haircut, right? I have to wait 30 minutes past my reservation to get my haircut or my appointment to get that haircut, right? That's not why people stop going to restaurants or businesses. They stop going because of the way we react. When we react poorly, when we underreact, that's the problem. And that's when you stop going to restaurant. When you feel slighted, when you feel like they don't care, right? That's when you take it personal and you stop going and you write that bad review. When someone writes a bad review—they're taking the time out of their day to write a bad review in any business—it's because they're pissed. They're angry and they're using that anger as motivation to write that review, right? It is motivating them more than anything. And so, why are they so angry, right? I don't get an overcooked steak and go, "This steak is overcooked and I am so—I'm getting infuriated by this steak being overcooked." It's that I said the steak was overcooked and your reaction to that is what upset me, right? And that's what makes me angry. And that's when I say I'm not going to go back. And I always do this when I'm training a new team. I go, "Guys, I want you to picture the best experience you ever had in a restaurant. Okay, now I want you to picture the worst experience you ever had in restaurant." And I'll go around, I'll say, "Tell me about the worst experience you ever had in a restaurant." And they will go off, right? You see the emotions start flaring up. And nine times out of ten, it's—and this is the point I'm making—it's a person, right? They talk about a server. They talk about a bartender, a manager, a hostess, the way they answer the phone, this, that. Best experience: they talk about a server, they talk about a manager, they talk about a hostess, right? And I always say, I go, you know, "You just had three people tell you about their best experience ever. What type of food did they order? What type of food were they serving? What did she get to drink?" We don't know, because she didn't mention that. They just mentioned this amazing person, this amazing thing, or this person that really upset them. So, when we react to a complaint that someone's upset about, it's really important to understand it's a really simple rule of thumb. Either they're taking it more serious or you're taking it more serious. If they're ever taking it more serious, you lose as a business.

Winn: So, you have to take it a lot more serious than the customer is.

Preston: Way more serious. And no matter how small it is, right? When they raise their hand—which, by the way, Winn, you know this—nine times out of ten, they won't raise their hand, right? Let's say they're upset about the way you answered your phone, the way you booked the appointment, the way they had to wait for that—past their appointment, right? Maybe they had a hard time booking with you and they're a little bit upset or irritated by that. They're not gonna go to you and say, "That was really irritating, by the way, Winn." Right? They just kind of, they internalize it. But if you get lucky enough from someone to actually say that and speak their mind, that's an opportunity for

us to fix the problem. And so, if they do raise their hand, we want to make sure we're taking it freaking serious, right? "Oh my gosh, unacceptable. I am so sorry. That is not how I wanted this to go down. I apologize. I'm gonna fix it. I'm gonna make it better for you. I'm gonna tell you that right now." And then it's our job from there to—we call it "guest recover."

Winn: As you're talking, so much of this just already feels personal to me. Like I'm thinking of a restaurant that I send a lot of people to this restaurant. And somebody finally asked me, "Why do you send so many people to this restaurant?" And I had to think about it because guess what? It wasn't that they had the best food, because I can think of other restaurants who have better food. It wasn't because of their decor, because I can think of other restaurants that had a better decor and ambiance. And you know what it came down to? It's the guy, the valet guy, is so engaging. He remembers my name and he's so funny and engaging and asks questions and that is the reason why. That's what it came down to for me: "Oh my god, it's because the valet guy is so amazing."

Preston: That's such a good story and I'm going to actually steal it if you don't mind for my presentation.

Winn: Steal away, baby.

Preston: Because I love that. That's so good. And that's exactly it because here's why, Winn: it's because we as human beings have a natural need for reciprocity, right? So, if you do something good for me, I'm gonna do something kind for you. You give to me, I wanna give to you. Naturally. That's our human nature, right? No matter what you want to think about people in general, our honest-to-god human nature is when someone gives to us, we wanna give back, right? And that's proof, what you're saying: this guy's giving to me. But nothing monetary, right? He's just freaking being kind and nice and engaging and genuine. And that's so—especially in this day and age, it's so rare that when you get it, the value-add is insane. And you're proof of it, right? You're like, gosh, it's not like some big, grand gesture. He just is remembering you, caring, making conversation, making you feel valued and seen.

Winn: You know, that restaurant that you and I went to last week, the first time—I think I told you. The first time it was not a good experience because it was the day they opened, it happened to be Valentine's Day and it was a *prix fixe* menu and we were there four hours. Okay, four hours. That was a lot. The second time we went there, our group grew by two people, like two people joined us, and the server was so put out by that. In fact, not only was she put out, but we saw her like across the room pointing at us and complaining to another team member.

Preston: Oh my gosh.

Winn: I know. And then after that, we said, "You know what? That's it. We're not going to—you know, we're done." Now, mind you, the food was just as amazing as it was when you and I were there. The food was consistent. It

was incredible. But you know why I now go back there? Because the owner who you—how many times did he come over to our table?

Preston: He was there half the time.

Winn: Yeah. Yeah. He took it so, so seriously. He didn't just shrug his shoulders. He didn't say, "Oh, well, you know, there's many more like you." He was on it and has just overdelivered in trying to fix that bad experience that we had. And of course, now I'm still very loyal. I took you there. I send other people there. I have feeling that a lot of people listening to you, or maybe their preconceived idea of what you do and what you train, has to do with high-end restaurants only. So, it's Michelin star restaurants only. And that's why hospitality is important to them. But you tell the Chick-fil-A story. You've got to tell us the Chick-fil-A story.

Preston: That's one of my favorite case studies and I love it because it's a real-time case study; it's happening to us in real time. And with that, people get to experience it and people have experienced it. So, Chick-fil-A, I always start the story off in 2001 when Chick-fil-A was worth \$1 billion. And obviously, if you're—Winn, you know this. If you have a company that's doing a billion dollars in revenue, you're in a very small group, right? Most people would be really happy with that. And not that Chick-fil-A wasn't, but Chick-fil-A kind of knew they were having a problem with joining that club. And that's that McDonald's and Yum Brands, KFC is, they're like, "Hey, you're becoming a problem, right? We want to do something about that. We're going to buy you out or we're going try and take you out, right? But now you're competition that we're going to start, you know, kind of puffing our chests up to." And Chick-fil-A wanted to know, because they're family owned, how do we stay unstoppable? How do we continue this growth? And they knew what made them successful was their hospitality, their focus on hospitality. And so, they wanted to offer something that no one else was offering: hospitality experience in a QSR. Because up until then, a QSR, a quick service restaurant or fast-food restaurant, was just, hey, you get your food fast, you get your food consistent. That's what we'll guarantee you, right? And there's nothing wrong with that. Like, I can't tell you how many times I've eaten somewhere for lunch. I'm like, I want my food fast and consistent. Thank you. But they're saying, Chick-fil-A said, we want to offer a hospitality experience. And everyone else said that's not what this sector is designed for. Fast food is designed to be fast and consistent and inexpensive, right? And they said, no, we want it to be a hospitality experience. And again, everyone's saying, people don't want that, there's no need for it. But they felt differently because they saw the numbers and why they were growing their business and why they were popular was because of their hospitality, their hospitable nature. But they wanted to scale. And so, they were saying, we want to scale. We want to actually map out this hospitality experience and we want to be able to actually build it into our people. What company does that right now? And so, they were looking around and they said, you know who does it the best is the Ritz-Carlton. And the owners, every time they went to the Rit-Carlton, they

were like, “Every person I've come across has this amazing hospitality mindset. The front desk person seems like they're trained by the same person that trained the gardener, right? Because when I see the gardener, the gardener has the same mentality and hospitality experience as a front desk person.” And they saw the power of that, right? And they were like, “How do we get that in our restaurant?” If you go to the cashier, the drive-through, the manager, right? Someone's maybe cleaning the bathroom, they're coming out. How do we make sure that the guest, when they come across that person, feels like they're trained to give a hospitality experience? So, they went to the Ritz-Carlton and consulted with them to build their training systems and leadership for them to make that permanent scalable. And a lot of people thought they were crazy. It's like you're fast-food fried chicken. Why are you going to the number one hospitality and—a luxury hotel company? You're fast-food fried chicken. Are you out of your minds? Right? Like you said, isn't that design? Isn't Ritz-Carlton, shouldn't they be like consulting with four-star, five-star, fine-dining restaurants? And so, they did it anyway, right? And they invested a lot of time and a lot of money into it. And the result is, if you fast forward to 25 years later, they're now, instead of being worth \$1 billion, they're worth \$25 billion. And they only focus on the guest experience. When you go through training at Chick-fil-A, they are like obsessed with hospitality and they make that known. That's what you train on first. Forty percent of their training and initial training is hospitality. After that 50, 60 percent of their training, continuous training, it's on hospitality. Their managers are turned into leaders; their leaders are focused on hospitality. The hospitality is the north star in their business. And because of that, they've been able to do \$25 billion with 3,500 locations. If you do the math per location, that's freaking crazy. The numbers are absolutely insane. And the craziest part about it, Winn, because you know a \$25 billion company is extremely rare, they've done it family-owned with no loans, no venture capitalists. They've funded every single dollar they've had till this day. That's insane. Like the rarity of that. And they've been able to do it, not because of the best chicken sandwich, which they don't claim and people don't—it's not known as the best chicken sandwich. It's not the cheapest chicken sandwich. It's the best experience.

Winn: And by the way, aren't they closed on Sundays?

Preston: Yes, exactly. They're closed on Sundays. So, they're doing it with their hands tied behind their back, right? Those numbers. They're beating out all their competitors because, I mean, there's no one that—they're number one per unit sales. They're number one in customer loyalty index.

Winn: You say that they're doing 25 billion and how many—billion with a B—25 billion with how many locations?

Preston: Thirty-five hundred.

Winn: And say KFC is doing what volume and how many locations?

Preston: They do—last year they did \$34 billion with 30,000 locations.

Winn: Wow. What a difference.

Preston: Yeah. So, we're talking about per unit, it's, they're getting crushed. Like you see it. Chick-fil-A has lines out the door all day long, right? You know, that's, you know, because their hospitality.

Winn: You know, so as you tell that story, something that comes up for me. Cause I hear this excuse a lot: "Well, it's that generation Winn. It's the generation we're dealing with today, Winn. They're untrainable. You know, we're lucky if they can just handle the transaction, you know, let alone a higher scale service. And forget about hospitality with, you know, what Preston's talking about right now." What do you have to say to that?

Preston: Well, you know, I think the generation before me, I think I'm a pretty hard worker and I think the generation before me thinks I'm probably lazy and hard to train and hard to talk to. And I think the generation before that thinks they were lazy and hard to train and hard to talk to.

Winn: Got it.

Preston: I do think there is a bigger gap, right? More than ever, millennials and Gen Z. But I have a friend who's a financial consultant and he's like, "Man, Preston. Every time I sign up someone, people always want to complain about the government. They always complain about the government, the taxes, this and that. They're always complaining about it." And I always tell them the same thing. I say: Listen, we have two options here. We can either complain about the government or the government lays down the law, right? They lay down the rules. So, we can just learn the rules and play to win, or we can complain about the government. What do you want to do? And they're like, "Okay, let's learn the rules, play to win." And I say the same thing about Gen Z, right? Gen Z, the data's out there. We have the data. We know what motivates them. We know why they're hard to train. We know how to train them. Chick-fil-A is a case study where they did the hard work to show us that you can get Gen Z bought in. Ninety percent, 80 percent of their workforce is Gen Z, yet they perform at the highest level possible. Go into it, go into a Chick-fil-A and tell me if you get someone at the cashier who seems like they don't know what they're doing, right? "Oh, I'm sorry, can you, I'm new, I don't know where the button's at." No, they know what they're doing because they're trained. It's not Gen Z. Gen Z is more difficult to train, but that's kind of like blaming, you know, being late on the bad weather. Like sure, maybe the rain caused you to be late, but you could have left a half hour early knowing that it's raining, right? Like we have to understand that this generation and Chick-fil-A proves that they are trainable. The problem is that we're failing. They're not failing us, we're failing them. We're failing them, we're failing our business, by the way, by failing to adapt. We need to adapt. How do we train them? How do we create a culture and a system and a structure where they can thrive? Like Chick-fil-A does across 3,500 locations. And that's why, I talk to some of the people I work with, I'm like, "You have three locations, five locations, ten locations. Chick-fil-A has 3,500, right? This is doable," is what my point is,

right? It's absolutely doable. It's what sacrifice are we willing to make to accomplish our goals?

Winn: I love this conversation. I mean, it's happened a couple of times where I'll have an amazing student graduate from my school. And in my school, they were amazing. They were incredible, you know, hardworking and professional and on time and engaging and fun and, you know, all the things that a top salon would want to hire. And so, this has happened a couple of times where I refer them: "You've got to hire this person. I highly recommend them." Salon calls me six months later, "Why'd you send that person? They were terrible." I'm like, "You know what? They weren't terrible with me. What'd you do to them?" So, I know that every business, every company has to have a standard that they live by. And then they just train, train, train, train, train, train to that standard.

Preston: And they lead to that standard. Right? You have to lead to it. You have to lead your people. You have to grow your people, develop your people. For example, if I own a hair salon, I'm getting someone fresh out of school, I'm going to have a development program for them. I'm not going to just jump in and go for it. Millennials can do that. The generation before them can do that. Gen Z is not like that. They want structure. They want clarity. They want you to hold their hand and walk them through. But if you do that, they will perform. And so, we have to be able to do those things. And Winn, for example, someone's going to your school, what do they want ultimately? What's their goal? Why are they there?

Winn: They want to be successful.

Preston: They want to be successful.

Winn: They chose an industry that they love. They want to love their career.

Preston: Yes, they want to be successful. That's why they're spending their money and their time and they're going through that process because they want to be successful. So, they're not showing up to your business to not be successful. They're not showing up to your business to give you the middle finger, right?

Winn: Right.

Preston: They're showing up to the business because they want to be successful, but at the same time, they need tools. They need support. They need help. They need someone to hold out their hand, right, and say, "I got you. I'm going to take it from here, Winn. Thank you." You laid down the framework; I'm going to build them up. I'm going to show them what it's like now to work on the floor because it's one thing obviously to be in school and stuff like that. And now you're going in an unprotected environment. There should be a bridge, but it's up to the salon. Right? I want my people to be successful. I'm going to give them the tools to be successful. Just like you want your students to be successful and you give them the tools to be successful.

Winn: Oh my God. As you're talking, I'm thinking of about a hundred different companies and events and organizations that need you. I'm going to be

sending your name everywhere. So, and we're going to get into the training part of what it needs to look like. I like what you said, and I want to endorse that again: that with this generation, they're not failing us, we're failing them. And I really like that statement. So, thank you for putting that out there. So, why is hospitality so hard to train?

Preston: It's hard to train because it's a mindset and it's a muscle, right? It's a skillset. So, the problem with it is that, just being really—our society is getting away from being hospitable in nature. Okay? If you go to Japan, for example, no one, zero people have a hard time being hospitable naturally. You don't have to hire someone to go, “Okay, we're gonna train you on hospitality.” They naturally know how to give hospitality. Why don't they train you on the way we do it, right? We have steps, but that's the easy part. The hard part is a mindset, but in Japan it's in their culture. They're raised with hospitality. They're developed inside of it. Where we as a society, especially in the United States are getting away from that, right? Less human connection and more of a selfish mindset that's being developed rather than a selfless mindset, right? It's all about you being happy. “You deserve this. You deserve that.” We deserve the opportunity to earn things and we deserve the opportunity to give back, right? And so, that's what we're now training or teaching people that are coming up and the younger generations that are coming up. And so, we have to kind of, now more than ever, we have to develop the hospitality mindset, right? We have to take it from 20 percent to maybe 100 percent versus before it was like 70 percent to 90 percent, right? So, we have to do so much more legwork to actually develop that skillset within them. So, the problem is, most businesses—cause we've assessed over a thousand businesses. Most businesses, we say it's like an iceberg, right? There's an iceberg, the top of the iceberg you see but the bottom of the iceberg, this huge thing holding it up that no one sees. What people try and do with hospitality is they try and train that top of the iceberg, which is the mechanics, right? That's just the mechanics, the top, what you see. So, you go, say this, not that. Do this, not that. Treat them like they're your friends, treat them like they're your loved one, treat them like they're a guest at your home, which is stuff that doesn't work, right? What we need is for them to fundamentally understand, again, what hospitality is, what it looks like, and then get them bought into it. That's the second piece. They need to be bought into it. They need to believe in it. Because if they don't believe in it, what's the point, right? We can tell them what to do all day. If they don't believe in it, as soon as you turn your back, they're to do whatever they want. That's what, just again, what Chick-fil-A does. Because here's what I hear all the time: “Preston, my staff's really young. Preston, my staff is—we can only pay them so much. Preston, this is a transient industry. People come to restaurants to work part-time while they're going to school, and it's just a job to them.” Yet you have Chick-fil-A, who has the least desired sector, fast food; who pays 8 percent over minimum wage, so they don't pay; and they have the youngest workforce in the United States. Some states, their employees are 14 years old.

Winn: Wow.

Preston: All excuses I hear—that's crazy. All excuses I hear all the time about why we can't, right? And Chick-fil-A is, again, an innovator, a disruptor. We can absolutely do that. Like, why can't we? Why are these reasons? *It's a transient job*: so what? They're still showing up. They're spending time here. *We can't train them? We can't cultivate a culture where they succeed and they go higher; we just accept that that's the mindset?* No, we refuse that. And they develop their people using training systems and leadership, hyper-focused on hospitality, right? And they get results. And so, that's why I say, like, it doesn't matter the age or anything like that. It's all about the mindset. And that's what we have to focus on: getting them bought in. It can happen at any age, anything like that. It's just, what are we doing to actually do that? And I can guarantee you most businesses don't have anything to cultivate that, right? To cultivate the mindset.

Winn: You know, I know that I have a lot of listeners who are entrepreneurs and they're leaders and managers, but I also know that I have a huge, huge audience of that generation that we're talking about who are maybe new in their careers. And like we said earlier, they want to be successful. They want to make money. They want to love their career. They want to, you know, love their customers. You know, we have this philosophy that to be successful, you have to love what you do. You have to love who you do it with, and you have to love who you do it for. So, we talk about that a lot and that's a big part of our language and our culture. But when you talk about that mindset and you gave us one example. Well, you probably gave a whole lot more, but what I wrote down: you gave us that mindset example of you have to become selfless rather than selfish. Are there other mindsets, other philosophies or tricks or advice that you can give us that needs to be part of that hospitality mindset? And before you answer that, so don't forget, so hold on because this is the ADHD that's kicking in and I have like 10 stories going here.

Preston: [Laughs]

Winn: So, I read this report that major employers are concerned about the next generation of new hires because empathy is down. And a good definition of empathy would be that you care about other people, you can feel what other people are feeling, or you're concerned about other people's experiences and feelings and emotions. And do we need empathy for offering wonderful customer service? Absolutely. Because we've all had that experience. You have a bad experience at a restaurant or at a store and you try to share that with them and communicate that. And they're like, "So what? I don't care." And I know I heard you talk about how low the bar is these days. And so, I'm sure in everything that I just rambled, there's a question in there. So, maybe you can dissect it.

Preston: [Laughs] No, yeah. No, there was a question there, but for sure. And yeah, empathy is a problem. Like I said, I think that kind of piggybacks off of the selfish mentality of, like, what's being built into people. And that's not a knock. It's just the society that we live in, unfortunately, right? It's all about me and my conditions. And you have to meet me where I'm at. It's all about me, right?

Do what I want you to do and say what—it's crazy, right? Versus like, we live in a world where, you know, we live in a world. Like we live in the world. The most successful people that I've ever spoken to, both with finances, with family, with mindset, with everything: they understand the simple philosophy is that we adapt to what happens to us, right? We adapt. We are accepting of it, right? We're accepting if someone doesn't act a certain way or doesn't tip us a certain way, whatever it is, we're accepting of all those things around us or surroundings that are happening to us. And so, empathy is a problem, right? Because it's not being developed and we have to develop it in our people, right? We have to show them what that's like. Again, Chick-fil-A has a whole training on this, a whole entire training on this piece alone, right? They have a whole entire training on this where they show videos of people coming in. They're sitting down, just like, "Sit in front of this computer and watch this." The manager or leader watches this video with them. And it shows people at the counters, real time. And they're coming in at the counter and ordering and it just cuts to people coming in and ordering. And it'll say this person just lost their job. This person just found out their best friend died. This person just got a promotion. This person just found out they're having a baby. This person—and we're watching and they're saying, "Do you understand this? Like, do you see what's happening here? Have you had something like big happen in your life, something tragic, something really moving that changed your life?" "Oh yeah, I had this, my grandma died and it was really—" You're gonna go into a restaurant and you're gonna have a family member that's gonna pass. You're gonna walk into a restaurant and I pray for you that someone that's on the other side of the counter is a person who's gonna care about you and make your day just a little bit better, this much better, that much better it's gonna have a huge impact on you. And that's what we want you to do with the people that walk into our doors, not just for the people, but for you as a human being. We want you to feel that. We want you to have that change. And you can if you choose to.

Winn: Wow.

Preston: What human being do we wanna be, right? So, that's training, that's development. It's not training, it's development. And your original question is, examples of hospitality, that's one. Another one, on a lighter note, is that we—I always say everyone knows how to give hospitality. We have to connect the dots in their head. This is part of the "under the iceberg," right? We have to connect the dots in their head. Not training them. Not me going, "This is what hospitality is. This is it. This is it. You see it? This is it. Do it." Right? No, I'm going to show you in your own head what hospitality is, showing you connecting the dots where you've given hospitality before. And so, you can go, "Oh, I get it." Right? So, I always, I go in a room full of people and I say, "I don't care how young you are. don't care how inexperienced you are in the industry. You've given hospitality at high level and I'm gonna show you how." And so, I say, "Okay, I want you—" I'm doing this in front of a group, right? I'll say, "I want you guys to picture you're dating someone for the very first time, or you're dating someone and you really like this person, okay? So, you're

dating a person, you really like them, and you're gonna have them come over to your house for the very first time and you're gonna cook them dinner. And you really like this person. What are you gonna do to prepare for that?" And I let the room answer, right? I'm like, "Shout out the answers." And they're like, "Oh, I'm gonna clean." I'm like, "Yeah, you're probably gonna clean places you've never cleaned before, right?" And they're like, "Yeah. Oh, I'm gonna put on music," right? "You're gonna put on music you like or music they like?" "Oh, I'm gonna put on music they like." "Oh, nice, okay, cool. What else?" "Oh, I'm gonna buy really nice food," right? "Yeah, you're not gonna go buy the manager's special shrimp that's the little funky colors, right? You're gonna buy the big shrimp and all this stuff, awesome." "Oh, I'm gonna get dressed." "Yeah, of course you're gonna dress well. You might even buy an outfit for this, right?" And so, they keep naming all these things and I say, "Awesome. Well, we're doing all these things, right? All these—you're talking about all these creative—why are we doing all that stuff?" "We wanna leave, you know, we wanna leave a good impression. We wanna give them an experience." "You wanna have them come back, right? You want them to tell their friends and family. You want them to tell a story about it. You want them to be impressed. Basically, what you're doing is showing up as the best version of yourself. That's hospitality, right?"

Winn: Wow.

Preston: That's what we're asking you to do with our clients that are coming in, with our people that are coming in. Giving them that experience. Thinking outside the box, how can I give them the best experience, right? And so, everyone, that's where they start saying, "Oh, okay. I've done that before. I know my motivations. I know why I was doing it." And now you're starting to give them ideas of hospitality.

Winn: So, you say that Gen Z is being indoctrinated with the wrong mindset. What do mean by that?

Preston: So, they're just, you know, it's, again, in society, right? "You deserve this. You deserve that. You deserve this. You deserve that." And it's not about that. Do people deserve things? Of course. That's not my argument. My argument is we deserve the right to earn it. We deserve the right to earn things, right? You deserve a great life. We deserve the right to earn a great life. I'm not born and just say, now I'm entitled to a great life. That's entitlement, right? I deserve the opportunity to earn that. And just like everyone else, I'm going to try my best to earn it. And no one's going to have perfect circumstances. And I understand that as well. And I'm going to try my best to earn it, right? And instead of saying, for example, you deserve the right to be happy. How about you deserve the right to help other people become happy, right? To give other people happiness, to promote happiness instead of "I deserve, I need to be happy, me, me, me." It's what are we doing for other people in our lives? What are we doing for the people around us? What are we doing for our jobs? For example, I love this philosophy is like, what are you doing for your employer? What's the last time, what have you done for your employer? It's

like, I think it's JFK, right? Don't ask how your country can serve you, ask how you can serve your country.

Winn: Right.

Preston: It's like, what can I do for my owner? Hey, Winn, thank you so much for giving me the opportunity to work here and grow and learn and pay the bills and all this stuff. What can I do for you? How can I go above and beyond for you, right? That's the difference versus, "Give me." Right? "Me, me, me." And that's a problem with the tip culture, too, is there's a huge level of entitlement. Like I heard a server say the other day, "If they can't afford a tip, then don't go out to eat." And that like is the wrong mentality. Like we're looking at things the wrong way. Why does that matter? Why is that in your head? You know, it's like tipping is optional—and I was a server for a very long time, a bartender for a very long time. Of course I want to get tipped, but tipping is optional. We have the right to earn it. Instead of saying, "I'm entitled to it." So, that's where I see the big disconnect.

Winn: So, one more question about Gen Z and then I want to get into other topics like leadership and training. So, you say that to rewire Gen Z training, turn a paycheck staff into a unified team of brand soldiers. What do you mean by that?

Preston: So, this is again what Chick-fil-A does and a lot of great companies do is we want to show them that there's a bigger thing than your paycheck, right? And this isn't for the company; this is for them. And I always try and explain this to employees that I'm working with is that, listen, the paycheck is the smallest piece of the puzzle. I always ask a group of people in the room, like, "Do value your time? Who values their time?" Everyone raises their hand, right? We all value our time. Okay, awesome. So, understand if you value your time that the paycheck that you get from your job is the least value you can get for your time. So, for example, if I go in for work for a week and I get a paycheck at end of that week, that paycheck is the least value I can get for going into work for eight hours a day, five days a week. That's the least amount. Let's say you make a hundred dollars a day or \$500 a day even, okay? You make \$500 a day. You're signing off your day, your eight hours, for \$500. That's it? You don't want to extract any other value out of those eight hours? That's it? Just a 500 bucks? Does that sound like someone who values their time? Let's leverage our time and say the 500 bucks will get me by now. It's gonna help me out with my bills and all that good stuff. But what I wanna do is leverage that eight hours to make myself better. So, how can I leverage it to make myself better? Well, I'm gonna show up as the best version of myself. I'm gonna come in in a good mood even when I'm in a bad mood. I'm gonna come in when I don't want to. I'm gonna smile even when I don't feel like smiling. I'm gonna give someone more energy and give them that hospitality experience even when I'm exhausted and don't feel like doing it. I am going to show up, I'm gonna be the best in the room. I'm gonna make sure I work hard to become the best in the room. I'm sitting here in this school, for example, right, Winn? This is all my competition here. This is all my competition.

- They're fighting for the same piece of the pie as I am. I wanna win, I wanna be successful, so I'm gonna show up as the best version. I'm gonna show I can outperform all these people, right? Whatever it is, but I'm gonna show up day in and day out at the highest level possible. And that's me leveraging my time. So eventually, instead being worth \$500 a day, I'm worth 5,000, 15,000.
- Winn: Wow.
- Preston: You've seen it, Winn. You've seen it, right? You've seen those winners where it's a guy who was like cutting hair or sweeping up hair. And all of a sudden he owns ten salons, right? He's driving a freaking, you know, BMW, right? Because he's sitting there going, "I don't care about the freaking paycheck. I don't even care about the tips. I don't care. I want to just become so good. I want to learn so much. And then I to open my own shop. And then I want to learn how to open up five and ten." Right? Just like your mission, Winn. You were like, "I want seven schools." But you didn't stop there. You leveraged your time. You're always like, "How do I get better?" Not like, "How much am I making off these seven schools? Where's my paycheck, right? Where's my money?" Like, "No, no. How do I keep going?"
- Winn: God, this is so good. So, here's an interesting question. So, have you ever been to a restaurant or some other type of a business that missed the mark in so many areas of what you call that transactional service? They missed the mark, but they were so wonderful with hospitality and had that connection with customers. Have you ever experienced that?
- Preston: Oh, yeah. Definitely. All the time. I mean, you can't do that consistently, right? But here's to your point. What I tell people, hospitality is it builds you a little fortress, right? It builds you a little protection, a fortress. So, if you give really good hospitality, when things go wrong, people are a lot more forgiving, right? They're a lot more forgiving when you're giving hospitality. When you're connecting with them, when you're taking the time and the energy to give them a great experience and something goes wrong in the experience—maybe you skip a step or you miss a step, forget a refill, bring in something wrong, whatever it is, delayed ticket—they're much more forgiving because they like you, right? You've earned it. Hey, you're awesome. "I'm so sorry. I know it's been 20 minutes. I totally forgot to ring in your order and I just rang it in. My manager's getting it out as soon as possible." "Preston, all good, man. You're awesome. We love you. You're good. Don't worry about it. We're good." Right? But if I'm sitting there being super transactional, making you feel undervalued, making you feel like I don't care that you're even there, and then I make a mistake, you're gonna attack. Right? I was giving you a reason. So, you can't be consistently missing it, but the hospitality piece is more important than the service piece overall.
- Winn: Got it. So, let's talk about the standard because you said every standard that you let slip now becomes the new standard. What do you mean by that?
- Preston: I see this happen all the time, and this is where leadership is management instead of leadership. And this is where, again, people are just completely

underdeveloped. If I'm a manager, right, and I'm saying, "Hey guys, it's really important to wear uniforms. Uniforms are so important. Here's why they're important. You got to wear them on certain ways, certain this, this, this, and that. And then I'm—and pretend there's, you know, two employees, three employees standing, you know, in the kitchen. And I'm standing there as a manager and an employee walks in with the wrong uniform. And I see the employee, the employee looks at me, I kind of give them a look and I want to say something but I don't; I want to avoid the friction. That's fine for today, whatever. We're understaffed, all the excuses. And then they walk away. Not only does that employee see me and I officially told them, "Your uniform, being out of uniform is okay. It's completely okay now. As long as I'm working, it's okay. I'm not going to call you out." Then you have three other employees who watched you watch them walk in with that wrong uniform. And then they said, "Cool. Next time I don't feel like wearing my full uniform, I'm just going to not do it because clearly now Preston can't call me out 'cause if he does try to call me out, I'm going to say, 'What about Jessica?'"

Winn: That's the new standard.

Preston: That's the new standard. Yeah. "You didn't say anything to Jessica." Right? "How are you going to say something to me?" Right? That's where you start creating that environment. And yes, that becomes the new standard. So, if someone comes in five minutes late, "Oh, sorry, traffic." "Okay, it's no big deal." Okay, so from now on, if I want to come in five minutes late, I'll come in five minutes late and say there's traffic. You know, and every other employee can do that, too. So, every time you let a standard slip, every time you don't say something, you don't hold the line, that's the new standard. Again, I always ask people, "Okay, \$25 billion company, one of the best, you know, performing companies, Chick-fil-A, do you think they hold the standard? Or do think they let excuses fly? Do you think they don't say anything, they get timid about it?" No, you don't say, "My pleasure," you're going to have a conversation with leadership.

Winn: Right. Okay. This is really good. And obviously maybe this conversation is geared towards leaders and managers and entrepreneurs, but trust me, if that is not your category right now, and you're listening to this, you know, for you to be able to set that standard. You know, it's, wonderful when you have a team member that just goes above and beyond, and you're like, "Gosh, how did they learn that?" That's so attractive. So—and I know the answer to this because you say that good leadership is so rare. So, who holds the standard?

Preston: Well, at end of the day, right, it starts from the top. Always starts from the top. And you can always—I mean, show me a great organization. I'm going show you a great owner. Show me a great restaurant, I'll show you a great leader, right? Like it always starts from the top. It's never opposite. You're never like, "Man, this business is ran so well. Everyone's so happy. The numbers are amazing. Terrible ownership, though. Absolutely terrible." It never happens. That's not gonna, it's never gonna be that way. I've never—I've yet to see that. And so, it always starts from the top. The owner holds a standard of—

and it's a chain of command. And this is where, again, a lot of businesses break. It just blows my mind. There's a chain of command. The owner holds a standard for the leaders. The leaders hold the standard for the employees underneath them. And that's how it works, right? And if an owner were to walk into a salon, for example, and see one of the employees not holding the standard, it's not the owner's job to approach that employee. It's the owner's job to approach the manager saying, "Why is that happening in your store?" Right?

Winn: Right.

Preston: "Let's talk about that and let's get it fixed ASAP." I'm never going to communicate with them. That's not my job. That would be confusing to them. Owners coming up, manager coming up, right. It's too much stuff. We've got to that chain of command and we've got to build that and that trust in our managers and leaders.

Winn: So, what is the biggest misconception that leaders, owners, bosses have about leadership?

Preston: That's a really good question. I would say the biggest misconception—I wouldn't say it's a misconception. I would say that they're misaligned. That's like the biggest problem we see is that they're just completely misaligned. Again, that's why we call it Thirty Percent. It's because we want you to focus on your people and nine times out of ten, and when I talk to them—you know, we assess these businesses. Staff's not bought in, it's a generation, they don't get it, they don't care, it's this, I've tried everything. You know, all these things. And then we go back there and we say, you know, we look and we go, "You're spending one percent of your bandwidth on your actual team, unless they're doing something wrong." Right? "You spend no time developing them. You give them five, seven days of training, and then you're saying, good luck for the rest of the time. That's it 'Good luck. If you do anything wrong, I'll let you know.' Instead of continuously developing them, mentoring them, training them, nurturing them, growing them," right? And so, that's the biggest misconception is that they think that their people are failing but it's them that are failing. Like I said, just like with Gen Z and it's like, because we're just failing to truly develop them and pay attention to them, grow them, nurture them. And then we wonder why they're transactional. We wonder why there's a lack of buy-in, why they don't care. Why don't they pick up that piece of paper on the floor? Why don't they have that vision? Well, because you're treating them like a cog in the machine. And so, they're reacting like a cog in the machine. They're going to do the bare minimum.

Winn: I like all of this conversation because I've heard you say that every business problem is really a leadership problem. And I like that whole philosophy. You know, where I was being mentored, "How do I become a better boss?" You know, when they come around and say, "Well, if your team isn't performing, it's your fault." I'm like, "What? How dare you say that?" It's your fault. Like

everything, no matter what problem came up, their response back to me was, "It's your fault, Winn."

Preston: And you're like, and then—so, that's a great point, right? Because it's true. Right? But then there's a lack of trickle down, right? Because what they should be saying is, you know, especially this day and age: "Our generation is different, Winn." Right? But in this day and age, you want to say, "It's your fault. Let's assess why you're failing and let's figure out how we can make you successful." Right? "And then we'll give you a clear action plan to actually do it." Because when you go up to somebody and go, "It's your fault your team's failing," now, without any other guidance, now I have to go and figure out why I'm failing and do all that stuff. And yes, I could probably maybe get there. Maybe, right? But even if I do, it's gonna take me a long time. It's mentorship, right?, Winn Like, what's the point of mentorship? Mentorship's like, "Hey, I made a bunch of mistakes and I'm gonna tell you what not to do. I'm gonna save you from yourself and I'm gonna tell you what made me successful." Right? That's mentorship. Same thing with leadership, it's mentorship. I'm gonna show you what not to do here. You're failing your people, I'm gonna show you what not to do and what to do, because I've been where you're at. That's why I'm up on the chain. And I'm gonna show you what to do to also get up on the chain as well. Also, just a flip side of that and then I'll stop ranting, but it's also, you know, when someone comes to you and says, "You failed," it's like, "Okay, how do I get better without blaming anybody else?" That is like a true—like, I'll tell you right now, if you're a leader and you have that mentality, you are going to be very successful in life if you keep that mentality. It's like, how do I fix it without blaming anybody else? Because it's easy to go, "Well, you didn't give me enough tools. You don't have enough time. There's not enough staff. I'm understaffed. We're not paying enough. You're not—" You know, all these things of why I'm not doing it instead of saying, "Okay, how do I fix this?" Because that's, engineering problem-solving is a big, big aspect of leadership.

Winn: That's great. Which, actually this takes us into the importance of training. I hear this in my company: train, train, train, train, train, train, train. You know, when, somebody screws up and they say, you know, "Why don't they get it?" I'm like, "Have you ever trained a dog? How many times do have to say *sit*?" Sit, sit, sit, sit. Train, train, train, train. It's ongoing. What does the common training look like in restaurants where, you know, a new server comes on or a new host or whatever. Is it like a week of training or—?

Preston: So, I go through this all the time because I can almost identify it right when I walk into a restaurant, but nine times out of ten, most of the time training is—basically, it should be five to seven. It should be like 10 to 14 days. You can't afford that. So, it should be five to seven days, but then what they do is two to three days sometimes. Three to five days, which is absurd because there's so much to learn and so much to develop. And then they go, "Why are our check averages—I know our check average could be better. Why aren't people bought in? Why aren't they executing? Why aren't they doing this? Why aren't

they doing that? How come they're not doing this?" It's like you trained them for three to five days. You literally gave them the worst opportunity, the worst start to their job. And then you're wondering why they're not bought in, right? "Oh, it's this generation." So, you get three to five days of training and it's basically you follow people around. Maybe there's one day of classroom, but other than that, you're following people around three to five days with no real, true structure. It's just kind of like, "What day you on? Okay, we'll start teaching you this stuff. I'm gonna start having you take a couple of tables on your own." It's just kind of like the guessing game of the trainer who was not trained in the first place. Do you see how this like—and this is not just restaurants, this is businesses and you're wondering why they're failing, right? It's like, because there's such little effort and maintenance and care that goes into your training process or development, you know, growth that goes into your training process that when people are trained, they're looking for the door right away. Cause they're like, they have no idea what they're doing. "I don't feel fully supported. I don't feel like I've learned how to do my job correctly. So, now it's making my job very not desirable because I don't feel like I know what I'm doing. "No one likes to feel that way. And so, that's just where they fail.

Winn: You know, I don't know if you said it during this podcast, or I heard you say it in one of your videos, that actually training growth is a benefit that people want. So, we think that the only way to bonus people, the only way to motivate people to grow if they're to get better is that they get a title or they get more money. And you're saying, no, growth and training is a huge, huge benefit that oftentimes is just so overlooked.

Preston: A hundred percent. It's such an easy thing to think that like a promotion or growth or whatever is a title or money, right? And it's a motivator. Is it a motivator? Yes, but it should be the last motivator that you use. It's very important to pay your people properly. And listen, some businesses, there's only certain amounts of money you can pay people because of the size of your business. So, you have to understand that and respect that. But if you have a, you know, more resources, try and take care of your people as best you can, try and continuously take care of them. But that can't be the motivator. For example, I had someone who was like on the floor and they were saying, we were like, "Hey, can you do this thing?" And they're like, "Well, that was never been my part of my job." I'm like, "Well, it is part of the job, we just never asked you to do it before." And they go, "Well, yeah, but I mean, if you want me to do that, you got to pay me more. Like, you gotta pay me more."

Winn: Oh. Right.

Preston: So, what happens if I ask you to do something else or if there's anything I need and I need teamwork, I need you to join in. I'm going have to start paying you extra every single time. That's a wrong mentality to kind of buy into. What people want is growth. So, a server, for example, a server will come in and they basically learn how to serve enough to where they can get

through the shift. And then they never really grow that learning curve unless you ask them to. And so, what happens is they start doing the same thing over and over again and they get super jaded because, as human beings, we need to grow. We need to feel like we're growing. And growth is knowledge. It's learning, it's skill sets, getting better at something, right? That's why I say it's not a title, it's not a money, it can be, but it's not the only thing. So, we can motivate our staff and grow our staff and keep them motivated by just simply keep training them. For example, if you own a restaurant, I'm gonna show you how to, you know, I'm gonna educate you on wines. We're gonna get you wine certified to a certain level. Food, we're gonna educate you on food and types of food and all this stuff. Hospitality, we're gonna show you this. It's gonna be a pathway. It takes you six months to go through this process. By the end of the six months, the server's going up to the table, super confident, upselling wine, knowing wine knowledge, being proud of that knowledge. Going to restaurants with their girlfriend or boyfriend and saying like, "I'll order the wine. Don't worry." They start talking to the server about all this wine, and the person is going to be impressed, their family's going to be impressed. It affects their life outside as well, too. When you educate them and grow them and nurture them instead of just saying, "Hey, uh. Well guys, if you go home and study the wine menu, you'll make more money because you'll sell more wine." That's not going to work, right? Continuous education helps tremendously.

Winn: So, your expertise and experience and advice, what does training need to look like? So, it's not just those seven days when somebody starts. Are you saying that it's ongoing and that we never graduate from the process of training and learning and growing?

Preston: Yeah, I would say for a position, there could be a graduation piece, right? But there's also like re-education, right? We can re-educate them online, we can retest them and all that good stuff. But there should be at least that six months, minimum six months progression, right? It needs to be structured. That's the number one thing. You need to have a structured—you need to have trained trainers. I don't care if you have a small business and you, the owner, has to be the trainer, but there needs to be a trained trainer who's consistently trained the same way. That's how you get consistent employees and that's how you get a consistent product. And you also need to have minimalism, right? That's what I was talking about. Engineering training is all about how do we give them the least amount of information to get the most amount of results. There's a famous artist who says perfection lies not when you can't add anything else, but when you can't take anything else away. Minimalism, right? How do we make it so simple anybody can learn it, so simple anybody can train it, right? That's the art of true engineered intentional training.

Winn: Okay. So, let's send some messages out to service providers. Again, I know I have a large audience of new professionals who want to be successful in their career or people who have been doing this for 10, 20 years, and maybe they

are experiencing that burnout but they want to up their game. So, they want better tips, they want more loyal customers, they want to offer hospitality, but perhaps this training that you're talking about and this standard that you're talking about of these systems don't really exist where they work. So, where they work doesn't offer this type of training or maybe the standards; they don't really understand what hospitality is all about. So, what advice do you have to share with them? Like literally, I mean, you've shared a lot. Training that they could take on themselves; they don't have to wait for the boss to give them information. Or just like ideas. Like I've heard you say it multiple times where some of your best experiences are walking into a restaurant or walking into a hotel and nobody was on their phone.

Preston: *[Laughs]* Amazing. It was amazing. So, yeah, I went to a hotel in New Zealand. And I remember it was, first of all, just like the hotel, it was like amazing right when you walk in. Everyone's greeting you, they're talking to you, they're so engaged, they're so freaking friendly. For example, when I left, I said, "Can I get an extra pen?" Cause it said Auckland on it, right? And I was like, "Can I get an extra pen?" And the guy, "Oh, absolutely, yeah. Hold on one second." He comes back and he has like a handful of pens like this. I mean, there's 20 pens, right? He's like, "There you go. Is that enough?" And I'm like, "Yes!" Instead of someone going like, "Oh yeah um, yeah. We don't have, oh, here you go." Right? It's that's such a big difference in that approach. But anyway, everyone was super friendly. I mean, over the—it was just so amazing, right? How everybody—and then I was walking through the second day and I noticed a guy, the concierge, who was looking down like this, like he was on his phone. And it occurred to me right then and there. I'm like, that's the first time I've seen someone distracted by their phone since I've been in this hotel, which is insane. And so, I walked by the concierge desk, I kind of peek over to, like, see if he's on his phone. And he was looking at a map for the hotel, that he was like mapping out some like some information. So, he wasn't even on his phone. And then I realized, I'm like, they have to have a no-phone policy. It's clear as day. And it gives you such a lot more bandwidth to focus on the freaking number one mission, which is the guests that are coming in the door. But to answer your question, so, if I was like a hairstylist, for example, and I'm like, I would figure out where can I separate myself from all my competition, and it's going to be the personal touch, right? So, now I need to get creative. And I would map out anytime I'm talking to my—any touch point at all I'm having with my clients, what can I do to make it special? If they're booking an appointment, when they first walk in the door during their stay, when they leave, 30 days out, 10 days out, 15 days out, what can I do in those moments to stand out to make them go, "No one else does that. How freaking awesome. I cannot believe they thought of that." Just like the Starbucks, right? The Starbucks, when they first come in, or whatever coffee, when they first come in, "There you go." When they leave, "By the way, I'm going to give you this product on me. Absolutely free. Just try it out. Use it. I just want you to have it, I think it'd be perfect for you." "Oh, thank you." Now, Winn who's paying for that, right? I'm paying for it, right? I am as a

- stylist paying for it because it's an investment. I'm gonna give them that stuff to not only earn their loyalty, their undying loyalty, but also for them to go, "You gotta try this person out. This is best hairstylist I've ever had in my entire life. They're so freaking amazing." Because it's reciprocity, right? I wanna give back. And all of a sudden their books fill faster than anybody else.
- Winn: Right.
- Preston: And, like you said, do not wait for permission. Do not wait for permission. Do it on your own. Don't ask your boss. Don't wait for that. Like do it on your own, take initiative. And then before you know it, you're going to be the one that's a boss. You're going to be the one that's going to be owning the salon. You're going to be the one that's calling the shots. So, but you have to take initiative. You have to think outside the box and you have to be consistent and you have to be willing to spend money to make investments, whether it's time, whether it's actual, you know, monetary things. Or just bandwidth and energy to take the time to actually do these things that matters.
- Winn: You know, in the professional beauty industry, a common conversation that people share, you know, trainers share, is that 15 percent of the reason why a client returns to the salon, returns to the barbershop, to the spa, has to do with the actual service. Meaning the haircut you receive, the hair color, the massage, the facial. Only 15 percent has to do with that stylist's technical and artistic abilities. Eighty-five percent has nothing to do. And I—so I guess what we're saying is the other 85 percent is the stuff that you're sharing: this hospitality side of it.
- Preston: Yes. And I agree with that because, again, as a hairstylist and as a client, I'm sure all of us, right, have a moment where we can say, "I had a really good hairstylist I absolutely loved. I stopped going to them because of this reason." I have one right now, right? Where I had someone who I was texting them to book appointments and right at first they were super responsive and all this stuff and then they stopped being responsive and sometimes I'd have to reach back: "Hey, did you get my text about—" "Oh yeah, sorry. When did you want that?" And the second time I had to do that, where I had to say, "Hey man, did you get my text about getting an appointment?" And then they were like, "Oh yeah, sorry, I got busy." It's like, you know what? I feel completely undervalued here. I have to follow up to give you money, the business, which I thought the main idea which is why you're here.
- Winn: Right:
- Preston: I'm gonna go somewhere else. And I went. And I loved the way he cut my hair; he did a great job but like I was, I felt so undervalued. I'm like, I'm just going to go somewhere else.
- Winn: I know that you're a big fan of scripting. You casually threw it in here, like the Ritz-Carlton and Chick-fil-A and I'm sure a whole bunch of other businesses as well. If a customer says, "Thank you," the response is not, "No problem." The response is, "My pleasure." So, scripting. Can you give us some other

ideas? Because I think you gave the example of, rather than when somebody walks in, know, "How are you doing today?" You ask what instead?

Preston: "You got any big plans for the rest of the day?"

Winn: Okay. So, repeat all of that. Tell the whole story here so that we get it right.

Preston: Yeah. So, I would say it's prompting, not scripting. I would look at it that way, right? And that's what I try because everyone hears scripting: "Oh, scripting. Oh, that's going to be stale, it's robotic. It's this and that." Well, it's not scripting. It's prompting. So, prompting—

Winn: Oh, let me change my dialogue. It's not scripting, it's prompting.

Preston: That's my fault because I said the word *scripting*, right? But I've been trying to change that verbiage because people are so, they get so turned off by the word *scripting*, but it's prompting. I'm prompting a conversation, a natural conversation. So, for example, if I go, you walk in and I start the conversation by saying, "How's it going today?" Right away, they're going to say, "Good, how are you?" And I'm going say, "I'm good, thank you." And then what that does is it automatically signals to our subconscious that this is a transaction, right? Because I'm using transactional verbiage. So, what I say is use pattern-disrupting verbiage. So, when they walk in, of course you can greet them like, "Hi, how is it going?" Sure. But then when they sit in the chair, it's like, "So, you got any big plans for the rest of the day?" And that'll naturally start a conversation that can lead to a longer conversation with more questions and stuff like that. "Oh, I have to go back to work." "Oh my gosh, where do you work again?" Or, "Oh my God. How do you like it over there, by the way? How long have you been there?" Right? "Was that your passion? Was that what you want to do? Or do you want—you got bigger and better dreams? Like what do you got going on?" You know, and then you can start a natural conversation. When they say like, again, Chick-fil-A does a simple thing. It's scripted, you know, but instead of saying, "You're welcome," they say, "My pleasure." Those are little things that you can do to separate yourself by having pattern-disrupting verbiage, right? Where you're going to say, yeah, the same thing. Maybe it's the same sign off, you know, whatever it is, but if you say something to where they remember it and they get acclimated with it, it becomes your branded style of communicating with them and they appreciate that because they like consistency and it gives them something different.

Winn: Wow. This is all such great advice. Can you believe that we've already been chatting for well over an hour here?

Preston: Yeah. It doesn't feel like that at all.

Winn: I know. I have two more things and then I got to start wrapping this up. I also heard you tell a story about how to deal with a bad customer. I know stylists that are like, "Oh, I just fire my customers. If I don't like them, if they come in late all the time, or if they piss me off, I just fire them. I fire my customers." And then I've heard other stylists who will say, "Give me the worst customer,

the customer that nobody else wants because they complain all the time. And they're just difficult to please." And there are stylists that say, "Give that customer to me," because they have the skill set. They have practiced; they have trained themselves. Because if you can turn around a bad—I think you call it flipping a bad customer or a complaining customer—they know how to turn that customer around. They know how to put a smile on that customer's face. That would be the most loyal customer you've ever had and they will tell everybody. So, can you just talk about that for a minute?

Preston: Yeah. Well, let me break it down. First of all, which route is easier, in your opinion, Winn?

Winn: Well, it's easier just to say, "I don't want them." You know?

Preston: Yeah. That tells you everything, right? That just tells you everything, right? Like what's the right mentality? It's like, and then your ego, of course, will come in and say, "Oh, well, you're protecting, you're this. You're setting standards and boundaries and blah, blah, blah, blah." But then that comes onto the next question. It's like, "Why are we, why do we exist? Why did you start this journey? What are you trying to do? Are you trying to be successful?" If you're trying to be successful, as successful as possible, then it's like you said: it's a skillset, right? And why are we here? We're here to serve. We're here cutting hair, serving people. That's what we're doing. We're serving people by cutting their hair or styling their hair, whatever it is. And so, our job is to serve them, not judge them. Our job is to serve them, not tell them they needed to be on time in more places. It's totally fair to say, "Hey, you're 15—I have a five-minute window or a 15-minute," whatever it is. "And I can't because I have another client. I have to respect that client, just like I would respect you. You know, I'm so sorry, but—" That's fine, right? But I'm not firing them or because they're difficult or because maybe they're rude one day. Have you ever been rude to a service worker before?

Winn: Yeah

Preston: Yeah, I have. I'm not proud of it, right? But I'm also not gonna—I'm hoping that service worker isn't just writing me off, right? And just understanding, you know, if you're going through some stuff, I get it. And maybe I'm gonna do a little bit extra to make your date better because you need it, right? And that's our job is to serve and to build loyalty. And they're not gonna build loyalty by judging the guest and saying, "You have to act in certain parameters in order for me to deliver at a high level." Because if that's the case, it's about me, not about you, right? And ultimately, no matter how you want to dress it up, it is about the guest. It is about the client. But when it becomes about me, then I lose. Right? That's a losing proposition. I'm never, I'm never going to—look, even if you're a freaking awesome hairstylist, I would say artist, but hairstylist, and you have a lot of clients and you get paid a lot of money and all that good stuff, you're still going to have that mentality, right? Because that's just the wrong mentality to have at any point in your career.

Winn: Yeah. Oh my gosh, this has been so, so valuable. Preston, you are so good at what you do.

Preston: Thank you, Winn. That means, like, I can't tell you how much that means, coming from you. I think you know, as an entrepreneur, you know, it's a tough gig and you have a lot more losses than wins on a daily basis, right? And so, you know, meeting you and having your positive feedback and your energy and stuff like that has been a huge win for me and put like wind in my sails and stuff like that, a huge motivator for me. So, thank you for saying that.

Winn: Well, thank you. And I know I have to really hustle with you because I know you're having a baby soon. And you told me that you're not going to travel anymore. I'm like, damn, I got to squeeze so much into his schedule before that baby comes.

Preston: *[Laughs]* Yeah, let's do it. I'm down. That's one thing. It's a tradeoff. I go, okay, I'm not going to travel as much, but until then, I'm going to go freaking crazy.

Winn: There we go. There we go. So, Preston, do you have a final message for our listeners?

Preston: Yeah, just, you know, for a leader, just remember your number one job is to develop the people underneath you. And that's it. Bottom line, period. And if you're an employee, you know, remember that the least amount of value you can get out of your time is your paycheck. So, don't worry about that and worry about leveraging your time to make yourself more successful in the future and knowing that that doesn't always translate into tangible things right away, but over months, years, it will. And you'll see it, you'll feel it, and you'll be motivated to do it from then on out.

Winn: Wow. I can add nothing to that. Other than tell people how do they reach you? How do they find you?

Preston: Yeah. Instagram is the best way. My handle is THE, the number 30, and then RULE. So, @the30rule, all one long thing. And follow me there. I give daily training every single day, motivational tips, stories, all that good stuff. There's a lot of amazing free content on there.

Winn: And I'm telling you, I've been down that rabbit hole several times since I found you and it's always, always valuable. So, Preston, thanks again.

Preston: Thank you, Winn.

Winn: Absolutely perfect. I knew it was going to turn out this way. So, thank you so much.

Preston: My pleasure.