



Opinion

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# From Fine Dining to Profound Connections: Joaquin Chavez Delves into the Psychology of Hospitality on the Come Teach It Podcast

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## Abstract

In this enlightening podcast conversation, Joaquin Chavez, a seasoned professional in the realm of hospitality, takes us on a captivating journey through the profound psychology of human connection and service. With a career spanning fine dining establishments and the intricacies of managing diverse teams, Chavez unravels the artistry behind fostering genuine connections in the world of hospitality. He reveals how the atmosphere, ambiance, and personal interactions in a restaurant setting intertwine to create memorable experiences for guests. Drawing parallels to the teaching profession, Chavez and the podcast hosts delve into the dynamics of managing people, cultivating relationships, and nurturing passion.

Throughout the conversation, the significance of lasting impressions and emotional resonance in the service industry becomes evident. Chavez underscores the transformative power of genuine interactions and the ability to make guests momentarily forget their worries, emphasizing that human connection lies at the core of true hospitality.

As the discussion unfolds, insights emerge into the training process, leadership, and the pivotal role of mentorship in both hospitality and education. Chavez's experiences resonate with educators, highlighting the universality of principles that transcend industries. He reinforces the idea that excellence in service and teaching is about evoking emotions and forging authentic connections, making this podcast conversation a source of inspiration for professionals seeking to understand the profound psychology of human connection and service.

**Keywords:** Restaurant industry management, Fine dining experience, Culinary arts leadership, Hospitality training, customer service excellence, Teamwork in restaurants, Adaptability in hospitality, Customer engagement strategies, Classroom management techniques, Environmental design impact, Senses in education, Recognition and regular customers, Training influential individuals, Emotional customer experiences, Brand perception in hospitality, Human connection in service, Teaching values in education, Family and learning

## Introduction to the Come Teach it Podcast

Come Teach It is a compelling series that delves into the intricate tapestry of human connection and service across diverse professions. This podcast aims to serve as a beacon of positivity, shedding light on often underappreciated facets of various fields of work, fostering a deeper understanding and appreciation for the art of teaching and service.

In this episode, we embark on an enlightening journey with Joaquin Chavez, a distinguished professional in the world of hospitality. With a wealth of experience spanning fine dining establishments and leadership roles, Joaquin unravels the profound psychology behind human connection and service. As we delve into his insights, we discover how the principles of genuine connections, passion,



and meaningful interactions transcend industries, resonating with educators and professionals alike.

**Authors' Note:** The following conversation was recorded prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the Authors' Notes and articles referenced are all post-pandemic, highlighting the continued importance and heightened relevance of the topics discussed in our ever-evolving world. As we navigate the challenges and transformations brought about by the pandemic, the insights shared here offer valuable perspectives on human connection, service, and education that have become even more critical in today's landscape. They serve as a beacon of guidance and inspiration as we collectively adapt to the changing demands of our professions and society, reinforcing the enduring significance of fostering authentic connections and service excellence in every facet of life.

#### Speaker 1: Michael Berger

Welcome to Come Teach It, a show about the rewarding and fulfilling experiences of the teaching lifestyle. I'm Michael Berger.

#### Speaker 2: Jacob Larsen

And I'm Jake Larsen. Our guest on this episode of Come Teach It is Joaquin Chavez, born in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Half of his life was spent there, and the other half was spent here in Southern California. He played D1 basketball at New Mexico State, got into the hospitality industry after college, where he spent 20 years in it. He's managed three different restaurants in LA and Orange County and still works in the industry while also doing financial services full time. So, welcome to the show, Joaquin.

#### Speaker 3 Interviewee - Joaquin Chavez

Thank you. It's great to be here.

**Jacob Larsen:** All right. So, I guess just to first state, you are also my manager over at the Anaheim White House Restaurant. So, we do have some professional affiliation as well, correct?

**Michael Berger:** Well, I had my father on, and now you're having your boss on.

**Jacob Larsen:** That's right. So, I guess just to bring it as far back as we can, just for your professional arc, just for your story, how did you get to where you are today in your career, where, again, you are... You've been in one of the, like, the top restaurants in LA and Orange County and have made a big impact.

**Joaquin Chavez:** Yeah, absolutely. In the beginning, as I finished my education at Cal State Fullerton in the last few years, that's when I got into hospitality. It was actually by accident; there was a job opening.

I used to live in Los Angeles. There was a job opening for this catering company, fine dining. They needed a bunch of experience. I needed a job. So, I told them I had a bunch of experience, and they said, "Okay, well, you're hired. It's going to be \$10 an hour." I remember the first seminar of training that had me pick up an oval tray, and I couldn't even pick up an oval tray correctly. So, they

asked, "Are you sure you have this much experience?"

**Michael Berger:** I said, you know, this is great about selling yourself and in teaching. One of the things that I find, I'm often saying to my students, seniors in high school, in a government class, is that when I ask a question, you need to respond with confidence-confidently answer the question. It doesn't matter whether you're right or wrong; just answer the question with confidence, like you did when you were breaking dishes. You were saying, "Yeah, of course, I know what I'm doing."

**Joaquin Chavez:** Yeah, absolutely. That's a fascinating point that you brought up. I talk about that quite a bit-conviction. Conviction is a great element of hospitality. But, um, yeah, so I got into it. I immediately climbed the ranks, and then I was hired by the Anaheim White House Restaurant. I became a main captain server in the main dining room within a few months. I just loved it. I love serving people, the fine dining atmosphere, and serving very powerful and affluent people. It put me through school, and after I graduated, I left the restaurant. I actually went corporate for a few years. Then I got into a startup company, which didn't work out after about a year, overnight.

That night, I remember I called the restaurant back. I said, "Hey, is there any way I could get any work while I'm in transition looking for a new career?" And they said, "You know what? Come back in, man. You can make your own schedule. You can start tomorrow." So I was like, "Ah, excellent." So I went back, and the moment I stepped back into that restaurant that started me in the first place, I remember I started delegating, talking, developing, and having little meetings with the staff that I didn't even know.

**Authors' Note:** Joaquin Chavez's exploration of the hospitality industry, with a particular focus on his experiences at the Anaheim White House Restaurant, resonates deeply with the concept of "Impact Hospitality." This concept revolves around the capacity of hospitality to effect social change. Chavez's rapid ascension from a server to the role of main captain server in a high-end dining establishment, catering to influential patrons, exemplifies the transformative potential inherent in the realm of hospitality, transcending the confines of traditional service. Chef Bruno Serato's charitable work through Caterina's Club, linked to the Anaheim White House Restaurant, exemplifies how hospitality establishments can become agents of positive social change. By addressing child hunger and homelessness, Chef Bruno's restaurant showcases the broader impact hospitality can have on local communities. Additionally, research underscores the idea that hospitality is more than just transactional interactions; it is about building connections, fostering compassion, and effecting meaningful change in society [1].

This notion extends to the field of education, where educators can draw inspiration from the principles of "Impact Hospitality" to create engaging and empowering learning environments. Just as hospitality strives to provide memorable experiences, education should aim to equip students with the skills and mindset needed to address real-world challenges and make a positive impact.

**Michael Berger:** It sounds like you were lesson planning.

**Joaquin Chavez:** Yes, it was second nature to me. I started realizing who I could depend on, who the leaders were, and then I focused on them to trickle down my message. After just a few days, the GM sat down with me and asked, "Are you sure you just want to do this during the transition? Because if you'd like to consider this a permanent job, we'd like to make you an offer."

**Jacob Larsen:** What was it about stepping outside of the restaurant industry for a little bit that gave you a different perspective?

**Joaquin Chavez:** You know what, I absolutely think that was a crucial part of that personal discovery. To change my major after my junior year in college, I had spent a lot of money on loans. Looking back, I said, you know what, it's better late than never. But in the career marketplace, trying out a few different things, I think is very crucial. Because what I found out later is that you're going to find things that you love to do, and then there are going to be other things that you're good at. And then the third realm is what you can make money doing. So, there are a bunch of different elements in regard to what is a fulfilling career.

So, at that point, when they asked me that question, I remember I was sitting, and the back door of the restaurant opened, and there's a long corridor, and the sun was setting right where that door opens. The light shined through the hallway, and the GM says, "Do you know what you want to do?" And it was like this 'Aha' moment. And I said, "Then it was right there. I want to own my own restaurant one day." And he's like, "Excellent. Then let's do this." I said, "I'm on." So that was the beginning of my journey in the hospitality industry. I found my home, and I felt that if I just really develop this passion and this joy of mine, the money will come, you know, so.

**Authors' Note:** Joaquin Chavez's career trajectory within the hospitality industry serves as an illustrative embodiment of the multifaceted dynamics inherent in leadership styles within this sector. A comprehensive examination of contemporary leadership styles in the realm of hospitality, encompassing transformational, servant, ethical, authentic, and other dimensions, underscores the pivotal role played by leadership in shaping critical outcomes such as employee performance, customer satisfaction, innovation, and sustainability. Joaquin's proactive approach to realizing his career aspirations in the hospitality industry aligns harmoniously with the attributes associated with positive leadership styles, such as transformational, servant, and empowering leadership, which emphasize motivation, inspiration, and fostering personal growth among their constituents. While Joaquin initially expressed a desire to own his restaurant, his journey ultimately led him to excel in managerial roles within the hospitality sector, where he effectively applied these leadership principles to enhance team performance and guest satisfaction.

As in the hospitality industry, effective teaching also relies on diverse leadership styles to engage students, foster learning, and facilitate personal development. Educators, like hospitality lead-

ers, may draw inspiration from theories such as self-determination theory, path-goal theory, and full-range leadership theory to guide their pedagogical approaches. By adapting leadership principles from the hospitality context to the classroom, educators can create a conducive learning environment, empower students to thrive, and inspire a passion for knowledge, mirroring Joaquin's journey in pursuing his passion within the realm of hospitality leadership [2].

**Jacob Larsen:** Well, I mean, for the Anaheim White House, to become a captain server in the main dining room usually takes a few years of being at the restaurant. You said you were in the main dining room after a few months. Was there something about your personality or a skill set that you already brought to the table that even when you first started in the hospitality industry, you had a particular knack for it? Or, I mean, again, when you came back, then you were managing, and you could see how to help the restaurant, how to help other people. Was that kind of innate in you, or where did that come from?

**Joaquin Chavez:** Yeah, I think it was, there were elements of it that were innate. What drew me into that restaurant initially, in 1999, was that the servers, the male servers, were making more than \$100 a shift and working only four hours. And I thought, "Man, this is good money." The craftsmanship of the wine, culinary art, the music, and the ambiance, it was just this beautiful production. And the people coming in the front door, they weren't just going out to dinner; this was an event. What made it so beautiful is that those people, for about one or two hours, were going to leave their life outside the door. When they walked in, they had no idea what to expect. So, making that connection with the guest, and this is the number one core of hospitality, is a smile.

**Authors' Note:** This conversation delves into the ongoing discourse surrounding the fundamental question of whether expertise in hospitality a product of is predominantly acquired knowledge or an innate aptitude. Joaquin's odyssey within the hospitality industry implies a synthesis of both dimensions. While his initial attraction to the field stemmed from the allure of lucrative prospects, his profound connection with the craft and his recognition of the distinct encounters offered to patrons revealed an innate passion for hospitality. His astute perception of the significance of guests leaving behind their external concerns and the creation of indelible moments serves as a testament to the pivotal role of emotional intelligence in this domain. Scholarly research that focuses on emotional intelligence as a predictor of performance in hospitality, aligns with Joaquin's experiences. Those emotional abilities, including those vital for hospitality, can be developed and improved over time, enhancing performance.

The parallels between mastering hospitality skills and effective teaching become evident in this context. Just as hospitality skills can be cultivated and refined, educators can enhance their teaching abilities through training and experience. Emotional intelligence, which plays a crucial role in the hospitality industry, also proves valuable in the classroom. Educators who can perceive, understand, and manage their emotions, as well as those of their students, cre-

ate a more engaging and supportive learning environment. The research on emotional intelligence reinforces the notion that skills can be developed, opening new avenues for aspiring hospitality professionals and educators alike to excel in their respective fields [3].

**Michael Berger:** I love how you set up the scene, the setting, and I want to bring this back to the classroom.

I do this in my classroom. The setting I have light so I we don't have to use the overhead fluorescent lights that give you a headache the One of the things, uh, we engage in as teachers is classroom management, and classroom management starts with how you even set up your room. So, I know, Jake, you liked how I set up my room this, this year.

**Jacob Larsen:** I have stolen your room concepts a couple of years in a row now, but the way he has the desk set up is... Basically, every single kid, you can act like they're sitting in the front row because you can walk right up to the front of their desk.

**Joaquin Chavez:** I can imagine what it's like planning and setting everything up the day before the students arrive for their first time. It's the same thing as a guest walking into the restaurant. They have no, I mean, they're going to forget for a moment. They're going to forget home. They're going to forget bullies. They're going to forget everything and they're going to walk into, I remember in my youth, all the way through middle school, high school. High school got a little bit boring. They didn't have to put anything on there. We just knew we were there to learn, but...

But really focusing as designers of the environment on all the senses, which are going to be tapped into: the sights, the vision, the sound. In the restaurant and hospitality industry, we also have flavors and textures and the music. So, the audio and the flavors and the scent, the aromas put with the visual and layout are all crucial in the design.

**Michael Berger:** One thing that is different though is as the guests arrive, they're escorted to their table, and we have some power over seating. I mean, in my class, as seniors in high school, I let them sit where they want at a restaurant. They don't just come into your fine establishment and sit wherever they... And so, [00:09:00] in my room, they do. But it's strange because students, even with free seating, wind up sitting in the same seat. They create their own seating chart. And I bet you have some regulars at your restaurant who have their favourite table, and that's what they want. They want that table. Why do you think that is?

**Joaquin Chavez:** Absolutely, every guest that comes in has a different personality set, different expectations, and depending on the guest they're with, the needs of the environment may be completely different. So, when they come in, you might have one guest that wants to sit in one place one time, and then depending on if they're on a business dinner, they want to sit in a quieter part of the restaurant. So that's another dynamic.

**Michael Berger:** We take that into account as well. You know,

this student. No, you cannot sit in the back, not in that corner. You're here up front or you know what? You should sit in the back today. So, we deal with that.

**Joaquin Chavez:** Or the popular kid or the pretty girl and like noticing how things kind of coagulate around that.

**Jacob Larsen:** They're sitting closer and closer.

**Joaquin Chavez:** Yeah, suddenly you hear chairs being slid on the floor You're like, wait a second. That's not a part of...

**Michael Berger:** That's not a seat. Everyone must have their own desk, come on.

**Jacob Larsen:** I definitely notice in the restaurant industry too is that a lot of people want to... Especially, well, not even just in fine dining, - even when I was working at Chili's or California Pizza Kitchen.

**Michael Berger:** Chili's isn't fine dining. I need to reevaluate my life.

**Joaquin Chavez:** It's all relative. It's all relative.

**Jacob Larsen:** People want to make a place their own. When they feel like they belong there, it's such a different experience than what you might get in fast casual dining. I don't think fast casual dining can ever produce that same feeling.

**Joaquin Chavez:** Yeah, in fast casual, whether it's fast food, fast casual, higher-end bistro, fine dining, or luxury dining, each setting requires a different type of relationship, going into the depth and the meaningfulness of the relationship. Fast food, on one side, there's no interaction with the personnel. When you go to the opposite end of the spectrum with fine or elite dining, some of these guests, you as the server and manager, are critical elements of the experience and establishing deep, meaningful, sometimes even personal relationships with these guests. And then there are all the restaurants in between where the relationships and the expectations of the guests are completely different.

I personally love the deeper connections; that's where we establish regulars. I've even been asked to barbecue and family events, and these people will come in and bring more guests they want to introduce to you. On that level, people love recognition, and recognition is huge in the fine dining [00:12:00] atmosphere.

**Michael Berger:** And in the teaching profession. We now do so much in the way of recognizing student achievement.

**Jacob Larsen:** Yeah, it's about personal relationships and cultivating them. Just like a customer that feels like that place is theirs, even if they've only been there two times. They talk to me like I've been their longtime friend. They talk about the owners as if, "Oh, we go way back." They probably shook his hand one time, but they feel like they have a deeper connection, and they like to share that with their guests as well.

**Michael Berger:** But at the White House, you don't do a certificate for customer of the month? You don't do that?



**Jacob Larsen:** Like a stamp, uh, stamp card system?

**Joaquin Chavez:** If they come nine times, the tenth of the meal is free.

**Michael Berger:** You don't do that?

**Jacob Larsen:** No. Well, if I can get you back to the story, because at this point, you've become a manager of one of the pillars of fine dining in Orange County at that restaurant. Where did you go from there?

**Joaquin Chavez:** I actually met my ex-wife at the restaurant. She was a guest there. One of the employees showed me her table, and I was very impressed. So, I told the server, Jimmy, to clock out, and I served the table myself. We got married about six months later. I always tell the staff it was because of the service, but they're like, "Yeah, you really put out all the stops on that one." But after that, to protect the family environment, I had to leave the hospitality industry for a few years. The nights and weekends were taking a toll.

That relationship ended up not working out after several years. After that, I took a little break, but I eventually got pulled back into the hospitality environment again. It's almost like home, where you feel like yourself. It's not even work [00:14:00] anymore; it's a part of me. I'm an expression of that organization, an ambassador of the owner's vision and brand. It's an amazing experience. During that period, I managed a few other restaurants, including one where we hired 175 servers, knowing that we would terminate about 40 within the first 30 days. And now, I'm training in a ballroom that seats 500 people.

**Michael Berger:** Did the servers know that? They were in competition with one another.

**Joaquin Chavez:** No, they didn't know. They didn't know. We were hiring based on resumes and interviews. But I had to see how they were moving on the floor to get a good understanding of their levels of hospitality, the steps of service, their comfort with working with others and teammates, and how trainable they were. All these different elements that we had in mind. After 30 days, we just drew a line, cut off the bottom 40, and said, "Hey, thank you for coming out, but our standards are looking for something a little bit different. We appreciate your time."

**Michael Berger:** This is a conversation I've never had with a student. We don't get that, uh, I don't want to call it a "pleasure," but I'll put quotes around the word pleasure of saying to a student, you know, there's a reason there are only 40 desks in here and there are 43 of you, so in two weeks, look around. Three of you won't be here. In law school, they basically did that. Though, in law school, in the, uh, I will never forget this, it was at the orientation, they had us all sitting down, and they said, "Turn to your left, turn to your right, and half of the people you see won't be here for graduation." And I made it to graduation. I did. The people sitting next to me did not.

**Joaquin Chavez:** I have a question in the teaching setting. So, I was left with 125 servers and only five managers. There was no

way we could intimately manage everyone. So, what we did is, as a group, we decided, "Okay, who are the top eight servers out of this group? Let's train them to be trainers because we can't have 125 requests off for a day. So, they're going to work through these trainers, and we're only going to communicate with these trainers." It's kind of like a funnel that funnels the information. We found people who were influential, who had charisma and leadership skills, and they could carry out our messages. So they stepped up, became the best servers in the building, and they were able to help us extend our reach of management over the 125.

So, I was wondering, in a class setting, if someone's not listening to [00:17:00] me. Okay, who can I? Maybe giving someone recognition in front of the class that they look up to?

**Jacob Larsen:** Well, I think a better way to look at it from the school's perspective is more on the administrative side. There are only a few administrators, one principal, usually three or four assistant principals per school, and there are a lot of teachers. Those teachers are the ones who impact the sections or the customers in our case. In our district, what happens, and Berger, you can speak to this better, is that the principal gets to choose department heads from each of the different departments like social science, mathematics, and physical education. They choose a teacher who can then be the funnel, if you will. So it's kind of a similar situation. It's not that you are treating your students like guests; it's the administration that puts it that way.

**Michael Berger:** Jake, I have two points to make to that. On your paradigm, you're presuming that a principal has a staff of teachers who all want to be involved at that level. So, in your situation, it was evident who even wanted that role, eliminating some people from the get-go. Those people tend to be more accessible or willing to serve in additional responsibilities.

But directly in a classroom, how do you manage a class of 40 students when not all 40 will be independent leaders taking on major responsibilities? This gets into pedagogy, group work, and complex educational perspectives on how to engage students so that even when you're not immediately in front of them, they will be on task and productive. Interested individuals should pay attention to all the content we have available on the website that we're going to make available. It all comes from the overall connection you have with the students in a way that they know if you're not immediately over them, they still want to engage in whatever they're doing because they've internalized and built up a vested interest in what is taking place in the classroom. How do you do that? That will take months to explain.

**Authors' Note:** The intricacies of managing a large team of servers in the hospitality industry offers insights that can be applied to various settings, including education. The significance of identifying influential and charismatic individuals within a group and nurturing their leadership potential emerges as a key theme. In the hospitality sector, as described by Joaquin Chavez, the process of selecting and training top-performing servers to become trainers themselves creates a structured hierarchy for effective communi-

cation and maintaining high standards of service. This approach aligns with recent scholarship on leadership and management, emphasizing the value of recognizing and cultivating leadership skills within individuals. By creating an environment where people feel valued, respected, and motivated, whether in a restaurant or a classroom, organizations can enhance team dynamics and overall satisfaction [4].

These shared insights underscore a common thread between the hospitality industry and education—a shared need for effective leadership, engagement strategies, and the recognition of individuals who can positively influence their peers. These elements contribute to meaningful and productive experiences, whether in serving customers in a restaurant or fostering student success in a classroom.

**Jacob Larsen:** So just to push it into current trends in hospitality, and I think we can continue to make these connections between education and hospitality, I just want to ask you, Joaquin, is customer service more important now than ever before, or is it?

**Joaquin Chavez:** That's a great question. Us being in this, the speed of the information age, and, you know, [00:20:00] you have the baby boomers tailing off, who are, if I respectfully say, the least technologically savvy.

**Michael Berger:** You have no problem with the word savvy.

**Joaquin Chavez:** Yeah, savvy. But then you have these millennials, like a 7 or 6-year-old who knows how to use these computers that, you know, 30 years ago would be considered supercomputers. They have a large mass. However, with the experiences socially with just social disconnect, the privacy of people looking for acceptance and acknowledgement, and this technology, some elements of it, you know, keeping people right next to each other texting, you're losing a lot of that natural human communication. Customer service, specifically face-to-face customer service or hospitality, couldn't be in [00:21:00] need more. It's an honor and pleasure of mine, for example, we hired some people recently, and we decided we're not going to hire based on resumes anymore. We're going to hire based on that warm, genuine look in the eye and the handshake.

So, we had this young kid with no experience. He came up to me, handed me his resume, shook my hand with a big smile, and it gave me this warm feeling inside. I said, "You're hired." He asked, "What position?" I replied, "Whatever position you want because what you have, I can't train. It's how you were raised. It's the dinner tables with your family when you were a child. It's your character, your integrity, your honesty, your love of yourself and life. I can't train that. I can train the rest in any position you want, but if you listen to me, I'm going to make you very successful."

**Michael Berger:** I have got to know; did it work out with that?

**Joaquin Chavez:** It did, it did, and he was working with us during high school, and then he ended up getting accepted into UC Irvine. His last day was just a few days ago, but he said, "I'll be back." There were actually some guests I was talking to at a table, and he

approached the table on his last day and said, "Listen to everything this guy says. I wish I had more time. I wish I didn't have to do my job sometimes. I wish I could just follow him around the restaurant to hear how he talks to people. It's awesome."

**Michael Berger:** You know, I really do want to make a point that connects back to the teaching profession with this. It's very possible just based on his resume, you might not have hired him because he didn't have the experience.

**Joaquin Chavez:** Exactly.

**Michael Berger:** You know, in our profession, there are two different perspectives. Some teachers who are getting students want to know from the teacher who had them previously, who are the bright ones and who are the ones that I need to be on the lookout for. There may be advantages or disadvantages to that approach if you know the students you're getting. But that is something that carries over.

**Joaquin Chavez:** Man, I'm seeing so many parallels right now. For example, if you have underperformers and overachievers in one class, I have the same thing whether it's customer service reviews or within my own staff itself. I was telling my staff last night; we had one instance last night where a plate got sent back due to an accident we had made.

But I told the staff, they couldn't understand why I was reacting so seriously. And I'm like, guys, we're not judged by all the five-star reviews that we have. We're judged by how well we respond to the one-star review. So, like in a classroom, you might have a certain percentage that have above a certain score, but during that one term that you have them, you're probably going to get more recognition for how much you turned over the bottom half.

You know that development, it's not the five-star reviews that make us great. It's how we turn those one-star reviews into five-star reviews. That's what constant development is about. It takes a lot of experience for us to see that in people. And honestly, some people we can't do that with. But if they're open, they listen, and you're leading from constant development is about. It takes a lot of experience for us to see that in people. And honestly, some people we can't do that with. But if they're open, they listen, and you're leading from the floor, or you're leading from the front, they want to be like you, those are the people that you can actually teach passion to. You can actually train passion, which a few years ago I didn't believe was possible. I thought it was an innate nature, but you can teach passion.

**Michael Berger:** Students come in and out of our government class having known nothing to wanting to be president.

**Joaquin Chavez:** Oh, exactly. That's awesome. That is awesome.

**Jacob Larsen:** Joaquin, how, because you talked about being a role model, has training others in hospitality helped shape your current perspectives on it over the years?

**Joaquin Chavez:** It's so true because you really don't under-

stand You can have a lot of convictions and when your own philosophies are, but not until you actually train people that you're actually going to see what works and what doesn't through other people's application And utilizing what you've said So it's you know, sometimes you spend a lot of time with an individual, but you don't get the results you hope for you do a completely different style or approach with another individual and they skyrocket and you're like, perfect.

Okay, that works, that works. So as the more and more as a teacher, I have to be honest with myself that. If I ever think I'm the best or that I know at all, that's the first sign that I know nothing. So, to be a teacher is to be constantly develop, personally developing myself. Every person that is either better than I am or something that I am not, I'm a sponge around them.

I'm going to, I'm going to pull, I'm going to pull their assets and It's a lifelong process. It's a lifelong process. Yeah, lifelong learners. Lifelong learners. And, and, um, I'm sure in the teaching [00:26:00] That's kind of the joy of managing people. When you see your efforts touch their lives, and it's got a trickledown effect, and then they can touch lives.

They'll never forget you, you know, and that's so fulfilling.

**Authors' Note:** Above, Joaquin Chavez's reflections on training and leadership in the hospitality industry align closely with recent scholarship in contemporary leadership within the same field---although Joaquin's experiences shed light on practical dimensions of leadership development. His insights resonate with current research in several ways. Joaquin underscores the pivotal role of hands-on experience in the hospitality training process. In the dynamic hospitality industry, leadership often benefits from experiential learning, enabling leaders to adapt to diverse and complex situations they may encounter. Also, the adaptability Joaquin speaks of, where he tailors his teaching style to individual needs and preferences, mirrors the flexibility that contemporary leadership styles in hospitality require. The industry's ever-changing landscape demands leaders who can respond effectively to varying challenges and situations, making adaptability a crucial trait. Joaquin's commitment to continuous learning also resonates with the modern understanding of leadership. Leaders need to stay up to date with emerging approaches and Joaquin's dedication to lifelong learning aligns with the need for leaders to continually develop themselves to excel in their roles. Lastly, Joaquin expresses satisfaction in witnessing the positive impact of his leadership on individuals and in fostering a constructive work culture, reflecting the idea that leadership in hospitality extends beyond profit to encompass positive effects on people and society [5].

These principles also bridge seamlessly into the realm of education since effective educators, like hospitality leaders, often draw from hands-on experiences, adapt to diverse learning styles, engage in continuous professional development, and gauge their success by the impact they have on their students' lives and the broader community. Consequently, these shared principles emphasize the

importance of practical, adaptable, and lifelong leadership in both the hospitality and education domains.

**Michael Berger:** Well, it also plays into the content of what we do. We can learn something as lifelong learners that evening, and... Associate it to whatever we're teaching and now our students have learned something above and beyond whatever we're necessarily doing.

**Joaquin Chavez:** Yeah, absolutely. It's that that dialogue and you never I can't imagine what it's like in the classroom when you if you're a Senior and you're teaching people for the last time and I can't imagine how it might be heartbreaking when you have been with you knew someone for three or four years and then they go off to college and you're like, man, it's like I'm not, you establish relations, you get, [00:27:00] these are good, it's like family, you know, I can't imagine what that's like. On the employment side, it happens sometimes, but they usually stay in contact, or they always want to come back to the restaurant or ask me for, you know, referrals later, but I can't imagine what it's like as a teacher.

**Jacob Larsen:** It's really cooled to see them, I think, be successful, obviously in school and in your classroom, means a lot to you, but for me it's, you know, the first school I taught at, I encouraged a lot of kids to get jobs at restaurants. Because of how much I saw that it helped me and my personal development as well.

So then when I go eat around that city, me and my wife all the time, we go into these restaurants, and I'll hear - "Mr. Larsen" - and some busboy or some server comes up and it just makes me so happy to see them doing well out in the world. You know, I mean, again, we're, we're government teachers, you know, I think a big part of my job is teaching kids to be my neighbour, you know, you're going to be out there working next to me living next to me.

**Michael Berger:** You always make such a great point [00:28:00] and that point is who do you want to live next door to and we in our profession have the ability to help shape the people we want to live next door to and I'm thinking about the hospitality industry and it's like who do you want to eat near?

**Joaquin Chavez:** Yeah, who do you want? Who do you want? Who do you want? Who do you want to serve your table? Yeah, yeah, you know, that's

**Jacob Larsen:** I think it's a big thing is when I when I train servers, I noticed that a lot of that same training or the pointers I think are like the best, they also would help make someone a good teacher in the classroom. Yeah, so I mean, what do you think it is about the hospitality industry or customer service that? Is something worth emphasizing in our society?

**Authors' Note:** Jacob's perspective on the value of students gaining work experience in the hospitality industry is not uncommon. His encouragement for students to pursue restaurant jobs resonates with recent scholarship that highlights the importance of hospitality work for personal development, social skills, and the

cultivation of a service-oriented culture. Furthermore, Jacob's observation illuminates the profound impact of hospitality positions on the holistic growth of individuals, extending beyond individual development to encompass the broader objectives of education. By participating in hospitality roles, individuals are not only exposed to opportunities for personal enrichment but also contribute to the overarching educational goals of instilling qualities that exemplify good citizenship and neighbourliness. This perspective underscores the multifaceted value that engagement in the hospitality industry holds for individuals, transcending mere professional experience to encompass holistic personal and societal development.

The synergy between these insights hints at the larger conversation surrounding the shared attributes of the hospitality industry and education. Both fields emphasize the significance of imparting skills, fostering social awareness, and promoting a service-oriented mindset [6].

**Joaquin Chavez:** It's a great point because some of the developments, you know, when I do my trainings, I'm not teaching steps of service. I'm teaching my staff how to make lasting impressions and how to stir [00:29:00] up emotions. Because a year from now, the guest is not going to remember what they ordered or what they drank.

But they're going to remember how my server made them feel.

**Authors' Note:** This point underscores the paramount importance of crafting emotional experiences in the realm of restaurant hospitality. Joaquin Chavez' sentiment resonates with findings and implications of recent scholarship that explores the intricacies of customer engagement in the hospitality sector. The central theme of this scholarly work revolves around the significance of curating meaningful and emotionally engaging experiences for patrons. It delves into how a brand's power, which relates to its ability to establish a unique and positive image in the minds of customers, can profoundly influence their level of engagement. This aligns with the Joaquin's idea that what truly endures in the memory of guests is not the specifics of their orders, but rather the emotional impact of the service they receive. This also speaks to the concepts of brand perception and resonance as mediating factors within the hospitality setting. For the Anaheim White House Restaurant, the desired perception is to be a source of enjoyment, delight, and sensory stimulation, while brand resonance speaks to the depth of the emotional connection and loyalty, they hope their customers feel towards the establishment. These mediating factors correspond to the notion that it is the emotional experience-the way in which the server makes the guests feel-that shapes their enduring impression and is the appropriate goal [7].

Drawing a parallel to a high school classroom environment, the connection is evident. In both hospitality and education, the emotional experience plays a pivotal role. Just as guests remember how they felt during a restaurant visit, students remember how they felt in a classroom. Teachers, akin to servers in a restaurant, have the opportunity to create emotionally resonant experiences that leave

a lasting impact on students. This reinforces the idea that the ability to evoke emotions and establish connections is paramount, whether in the context of restaurants, museums, or education. It underscores the shared objective of creating meaningful, engaging, and emotionally enriching experiences that endure in the memories of the audience, be it customers or students.

**Michael Berger:** Well, now we take pictures of the food, so we don't have to make the memories.

**Joaquin Chavez:** But these lessons that we teach them, I tell them, guys, you can use this anywhere you go in life. This hospitality is just all it is about human connection. And in a society like today, where we have so much disconnected, this hospitality is just connecting.

And honestly, it's as basic as a smile. A smile is the best introduction and real smiles are hard to come by. So, when we find these people that have that hospitality gene, let's give them our love and our mind and it's going to be contagious.

**Michael Berger:** Thank you so much for coming in, Joaquin. I really loved making the connection, just seeing the connection between hospitality.

Educating and really being able to appreciate, uh, Jake, the experiences you go through. And I think you should keep encouraging kids to engage in the profession.

**Joaquin Chavez:** Yeah, and I'm, I'm excited. There's a new element of my life. Um, just found out that, uh, um, my fiancé and I are pregnant. So, I'm looking at to be, uh, straight teach hospitality to a child soon.

And, uh, I think the best way for me to do that is surrounded by love. And, um, just teach the values of life and human connection.

**Michael Berger:** Congratulations!

**Jacob Larsen:** And I hope you, uh, intend to put your student, or your kid, in our classroom one day.

**Joaquin Chavez:** I will. You have my word.

**Jacob Larsen:** Alright, thanks for coming in, Joaquin. It was a pleasure talking to you.

**Joaquin Chavez:** Thank you, guys. Thank you.

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## Conflict of Interest

None of the authors have a conflict of interest.

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