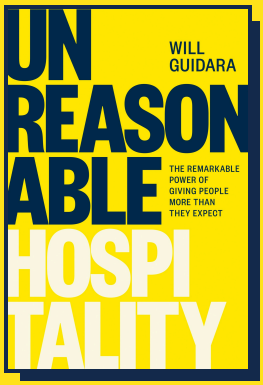
UNREASONABLE HOSPITALITY

WILL GUIDARA

THE REMARKABLE POWER OF GIVING PEOPLE MORE THAN THEY EXPECT



In 2010 Eleven Madison Park came **last** on the World's 50 Best list. That night Guidara and chef Daniel Humm wrote on a napkin, ***"We will be Number One in the world,"*** and the two words that became their plan: **Unreasonable Hospitality**. Seven years later they were No. 1. His claim: any business can compete on how it makes people feel.

> **Why "unreasonable"?** Critics said it to shut them down: ***"You're not being realistic… You're being unreasonable."*** It became their call to arms, because ***"no one who ever changed the game did so by being reasonable."***

SERVICE = BLACK & WHITE

Competence and efficiency. ***"Getting the right plate to the right person at the right table is service."***

HOSPITALITY = COLOR

Genuinely engaging with the person you're serving, to make an authentic connection. ***"Service is black and white; hospitality is color."***

THE RULE OF 95/5

"Manage 95 percent of your business down to the penny; spend the last 5 percent 'foolishly.'"

Blue spoons: at MoMA's gelato cart he bought absurdly expensive tiny Italian spoons, paid for by running everything else tight.

Sleds: a Spanish family had never seen snow. EMP bought four sleds and sent them to Central Park in a chauffeured SUV.

"It isn't the lavishness of the gift that counts, but its pricelessness."



THE HOT DOG. European guests said the one thing they hadn't eaten in New York was a street hot dog. Guidara bought one from a cart; Humm plated it in four pieces. The highlight of their trip.

LEGENDS & DREAMWEAVERS

The hot dog led to a full-time **Dreamweaver** role (one, then up to four) building personal gestures, called **Legends**: something the guest will tell a story about.

Tool kit for moments that recur: city maps, a hangover "morning rescue kit," snack boxes for flights, to-go cups for smokers.

"Luxury means just giving more; hospitality means being more thoughtful."

TEAM FIRST

Danny Meyer's **Enlightened Hospitality**: take care of your people first; they take care of the guests.

- **Daily 30-minute pre-meal:** ***"where a collection of individuals becomes a team."***
- **Hire for attitude;** everyone starts as a kitchen server.
- **Give ownership** ***"before they're ready."***
- ***"Praise is affirmation, but criticism is investment."***

HOUSE LANGUAGE

Their perception is our reality

One-Inch Rule finish the last inch

Make the charitable assumption | **Be the swan**

Slow down to speed up

DBC breathe; how can I help?

Touch the lapel = I need help

Don't go to bed angry | **Earn informality**

Make it nice | **What's the hospitality solution?**

USE IT MONDAY

- **Remove one transaction** customers feel: a counter, a screen, a form.
- **Ask what they don't want**, and admit your own dislike first.
- **Build a tool kit** for the moments that keep recurring.
- **Count the interruptions** in your customer's journey; cut some.
- **Give each new hire** one thing to improve in their first weeks.
- **Be your own customer** once a season.

FROM LAST TO FIRST

2006 — Guidara, 26, made GM; Humm hired

2009 — Four *New York Times* stars

2010 — 50th of 50; the napkin

2011 — They buy EMP from Danny Meyer

2016 — No. 3 and the first Art of Hospitality Award

No. 1 — The next year, seven years after the napkin

WHEN IT GOES TOO FAR

- **Burnout, 2008:** they slowed menu changes and dropped flourishes. ***"Do less, and do it well."***
- **Ninety interruptions** across a 15-course meal: ***"That is unreasonable, but it's not hospitality."*** Cut to 7.
- **Control vs. trust:** he admits repeating the same mistake. And abuse is never okay: "*The customer isn't always right.*"

"Fads fade and cycle, but the human desire to be taken care of never goes away."

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