

# Food article summary response

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"Serves Us Right" by Phoebe Damrosch describes the occupation of waiting as overlooked, treated badly, and in need of some change. We pay attention to and adore the rock star chefs, yet we often ignore those who deal with our food most, our waiters. Waiters in America are undertrained and treated poorly. Waiters work unpredictable schedules for unpredictable pay which depends heavily on tipping. They often do not receive work benefits such as healthcare and paid sick leave(1). As a result the quality of waiting is not great, because it is not a good job to hold, and there is a large turnover of new employees(2).

Restaurants can improve the quality of waiting in America if they were to provide training and benefits(2). Damrosch suggests that removing tipping in exchange for a service charge paid by the employers would result in better service. Damrosch states that "The service charge shifts the focus from the money to the experience"(1). The occupation of waiting in its current state is sub par because the working conditions are sub par; waiter working conditions must be improved before work quality can too.

Phoebe Damrosch makes many great points and is correct in her statements about the occupation of waiting and the occupation of waiting needs some changes for the better. Waiters and waitresses have some of the most unpredictable hours and schedules, making it difficult to schedule and lead their lives outside of their occupation. On top of that, they are underpaid; most waiters only make minimum wage and their salary is determined by how much they receive through tipping. Waiting is not a simple occupation either, it takes a lot of work and effort especially when it is busy to try and attend to all their customers.

Taking orders, refilling drinks, making sure everything is OK, as well as delivering food from the kitchen requires a lot of multitasking skills and focus. I agree with Damrosch that tipping is instrumental in the failure of good service. With their already low wages, waiters and waitresses rely heavily on tipping, that means getting the customers in and out as fast as possible. This attitude towards working neglects the overall experience of each customer. Damrosch questions whether tipping should be held in practice anymore, and I completely agree.

Removing tipping and boosting the base salary of waiters and waitresses would allow them to focus more on doing a good job instead of scrambling around trying to work as fast they can to receive more money from tipping each night. Most waiters and waitresses do not receive health care or other benefits either further adding to the list of negatives. All in all, Damrosch is correct, the occupation of waiting is one that is a lot of work, and hardly worth it. Too many negatives exist to keep people interested in waiting.

For those that do practice waiting as their occupation, there is little motivation to do their job well. This job sees a lot of turnover as a result, so training becomes impractical and good service is becoming rare. The existence of tipping shifts the focus from providing quality service to trying to make as much money as possible. Waiting is hard work and improving the conditions of waiting is necessary before any improvement in the quality of work can be expected to be seen. Works Cited Damrosch, Pheobe. "Serves Us Right". New York Times September, 19, 2009: 1-2.