

THE 7 THINGS YOU'RE DOING THAT ARE SECRETLY KILLING YOUR TIPS

And What to Do Instead Without Kissing Anyone's Ass

I didn't learn this just to make better tips.

I learned this so I could work less than 20 hours a week waiting tables while building the life I actually wanted outside the restaurant.

Who I Am

I'm Mark Sanchez, founder of Unforgettable Hospitality.

I help servers make more money and help restaurants create stronger guest experiences that lead to better reviews and more repeat business.

I've spent over 20 years in hospitality, and these lessons were built in real restaurants, under real pressure, with real guests.

1. Being “Just Nice” Without Being Memorable

Why it kills your tips:

Guests forget nice. They remember impact.

What to do instead:

Leave an impression. Use humor, ask a thoughtful question, or make a unique recommendation they'll want to tell people about.

If you feel confident enough, find someone in the group to playfully poke fun at. People love banter when it's done right.

Example:

You: “Damn bro, you know not finishing your beer is alcohol abuse? There's somebody on a corner somewhere begging for that!”

Guest: “It's warm.”

You: “Well next time drink it faster or order a baby beer.”

Nine times out of ten, the table laughs.

2. Taking the Order Like a Robot

Why it kills your tips:

If you sound like a script, they treat you like background noise.

What to do instead:

Engage. Make it a conversation, not a transaction. Be specific. Ask, suggest, and recommend.

Example:

“Are you in the mood for comfort food or something a little wild?”

“You should try our Bootylicious Dip. It’s amazing. And if you don’t think so, I’ll make that table pay for it.”

3. Not Owning the Energy at the Table

Why it kills your tips:

You let them lead the vibe.

What to do instead:

Set the tone. Smile. Stand tall. Carry the energy you want reflected back to you. Your presence matters. Let them know you’re the captain of this ship.

Example:

“Hey y’all, as you can see, it’s a little cray cray in here, so if you need my attention, raise your hand and yell my name. I promise wherever I am, I’ll acknowledge you and make it to you ASAP.”

That makes the experience interactive and fun.

4. Skipping the Small Upsell

Why it kills your tips:

Missed money equals missed tip percentage.

What to do instead:

Suggest something specific and light.

Examples:

“Want to start with the garlic bread while you wait?”

“If it’s okay with your wife, how about making that a double? It’s Friday. I’m sure you need it.”

5. Being Reactive Instead of Proactive

Why it kills your tips:

They have to chase you down for what they need.

What to do instead:

Anticipate needs. Notice empty drinks. Pre-buss the clutter. Ask about refills before they ask you.

Sometimes I don't even ask. I just slide it in there like a ninja.

Unless it's for a kid. Then I ask the parent first.

That, my friend, is a bonus pro tip.

6. Letting a Bad Table Kill Your Whole Vibe

Why it kills your tips:

One shitty table can poison the rest of your section.

What to do instead:

Compartmentalize. Handle them with grace, then keep it moving. Don't let their energy hijack your shift.

Take a walk into the cooler. Take some deep breaths. Scream if you need to.

"Fuck these assholes!"

Then come back with a lunatic's smile and keep serving.

Do your best not to carry that energy to your other tables. Trust me, they can feel your vibe.

7. Not Asking for the 5-Star Review

Why it kills your tips:

Tips are great, but reviews bring in new money.

What to do instead:

If the table had a great time, ask with confidence.

Example:

"Hey, if you enjoyed the service, do me a favor and leave me a 5-star review. Even if you thought I was a 5-star douchebag, as long as it has 5 stars and my name, that's all that matters. Thank you."

Proof This Works

All the tips in this guide helped me win a 5-star review contest and rack up **72 Google reviews in March 2025** at **Booty's Wings Burgers & Beer** in Surprise, Arizona.

More recently, I got **45 five-star reviews in my first 25 shifts** at **Zeta's Grill** in Avondale, Arizona.

Look up **Mark Sanchez** and see for yourself.

Serving Isn't a Dead-End Job

It's one of the few industries on earth that can fund your freedom if you know how to work it right.

These tips helped me turn part-time restaurant work into the launch pad for the life I actually wanted to live.



Final Word

You don't need to be perfect. You need to be intentional.

Small shifts create:

- bigger tips
- better days
- more confidence
- and a way to use this job as a stepping stone instead of a life sentence

This job can either drain you or fund your freedom.

I chose the second.

If you want to learn how, book a **From Tips to Freedom Free Strategy Call** with me.

Book here: [Book Here](#)