

HEARD!

A **#FairKitchens** initiative powered by **Unilever Food Solutions** and **Chefs with Issues**

HEARD! NOLA July 24, 2018

Background and journey to create a Fair Kitchen:

Chef Frank Brigsten: The culinary industry started as a job, not a profession. That has changed and it's important for people to leave their job every day happy. By being in this industry, you're attracted to something creative and high achieving, and along with that sometimes comes addiction.

Chef Michael Gulotta: I'm stuck in the middle of a journey. When I ran someone else's kitchen I always tried to be courteous and fair. Traveling down this road, I learned that I struggled with the ability to connect with people. It's easier to just show up and do your job, but it's not easy to truly listen.

Dr. Arwen Podesta of Tulane: Seen an upswing massively for people in this industry using. The people I see are seeking help. Chefs and high achieving industry (overly ambitious) tolerate little sleep and high-pressure lifestyle. A lot of people don't seek help because they don't know where to start. Often times those who are struggling don't have the will power to do anything but work.

The pressure just keeps building up, so how do you foster an environment where people feel empowered to speak up?

Chef Frank: Don't just train on recipes and pickups. The two most important tools you have are not arms and hands, they are eyes and ears. Stay tuned in to service. Same with management. Stay open to dynamics of personalities. Salvage relationships before throwing them out. Keep the balance. You have to balance drive, dreams and ambition.

Dr. Arwen: Take care of your personal and mental health so that your life and career doesn't get disrupted. End goal is to survive and thrive. Recommends a 110 min cardio/week to balance anxiety. Limit alcohol to help with sleep. There's not a training/management on how to run a #FairKitchen. It's all about learning from experience and adapting to how you want it to actually run.

Chef Mike: Struggled because he wanted to jump on the line and help. Tries to really establish that understanding and asks "what's going on?" wants them to know he wants them to be here. Change the

repour that he wants to help and not yell when he's standing over someone's station. We are a team here. There's lines of communication and this is how it's going to work. You show up everyday and try to figure it out. We care about people. Yes, you can put something on the wall but it's so much harder to get that soul. We have your back. Go to each person and shake their hand every day, make eye contact, ask how they're doing. Don't be afraid to tell me what's going on.

Recently industry suffered a huge loss of Anthony Bourdain. He seemingly had everything. We need more language around asking people how they are? How do you do this?

Chef Frank: Food is a powerful medium. Show willingness to work hard to make yourself better. You have the power to make a difference in someone's life. If you have the power to reach out and lift up, you'll find you can gain more than you have to give.

Dr. Arwen: Just open the door and say I'm here. People are scared to open by being scared of being fired or being perceived as weak. Sometimes bringing a team together to support or other option is to elevate them and comfort them. The group and the team surrounding can keep an eye and keep nudging.

Chef Frank: Don't get confrontational, but you have to nudge a little bit. The hardest part of our job is often dealing with people, hiring, firing, or finding people. Healthy way to wind down at the end of the shift. Reading, running, walk your dog, don't eat anything sweet or hot late, get into a routine, take a bath, get off your screen. Mindfulness apps

Good cooks and chefs love the intensity of being busy. Orchestrating that dance requires a certain calmness, others have a natural tendency to turn to anger. If you tear someone down, you need to build them back up.

Chef Mike: Set the tone of saying please and thank you. "Please I really need you to get this right. Thank you I appreciate that." Don't make things personal. Be consistent. Anger stems from an internal issue, they might be mad at themselves, could be pain or fear. Tough to do but give them some tenderness. With ownership comes tremendous freedom. But also tremendous responsibility.

Dr. Arwen: Sometimes struggle with how to make staff know that you want to be available. Sometimes put the resource on the wall so it's there without someone having to have the conversation. Resource 211 phone number if they don't know where to start in Louisiana. <http://www.louisiana211.org/>

The time between the service end and all the people are asleep, others are ready to give into shots/drinking or your alone. Use the "hour" to quiet your mind

Manager/ boss or friend/confidante. How do you make the separation?

Chef Frank: Don't make a separation

Chef Mike: I don't socialize or go out with the crew. I'm here for you if you need it, but I'm still your boss. Be comfortable with everyone on my team, I keep my out of work time, which is limited, separate

I'm never going to be the best chef in the world, but I want to be the best boss in the world. I want to be a mentor, educate and help people. Make the place I work at be a place that people want to come to learn. Selflessly recognize other people's goals, network, help find them the right opportunity.

What is something you do to take care of yourself and your mental health?

Chef Mike: Good sleep, one day off per week, work the pass, spend a day with my kids and walking the dog. Using app *HeadSpace*.

Chef Frank: I've never been happier in my work than I am today. Get away for a weekend. Refresh.

Kat Kinsman: Spend more time around people. Eat breakfast. When someone reaches out to you, reach back. Check in with your people. Send a text, hey you're on my mind, how are you? Make it known you're present and available.

Closing Remarks:

Chef Frank: We all have a lot in common, we all have dreams, we have bumps in the road, let's go through it together. We're blessed with diversity, different palates, embrace it.

Chef Mike: We see a need, the same issues keep popping up, it's a conversation that needs to be had and needs to continue. Don't let it stop here. Understand there are people struggling around you all the time. Be open to the conversation.