

Refire

A SIX WEEK SERIES



Workbook

Refire, a six-week speaker series in the spring of 2021, gathered six experts in their chosen fields to talk about making meaningful changes to the systemic issues that plague hospitality. Each speaker brought their unique experiences from outside of our industry and applied them to problems we encounter at our workplaces everyday. We asked them all to supply actionable steps we might take as individuals and as a community to make a kinder, more equitable future. This workbook is a collection of resources in one centralized location for you to make notes, add your thoughts, and refer back to whenever you might need a refresher. We also will be sifting out important concepts and defining and delving into the words that are the foundation to transformation. We encourage you to flesh out your own reflections, and challenge you to use these conversations as the jumping off point for creating change within your own sphere.

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Refire

A SIX WEEK SERIES

X Paper
X Pencil
X Open Mind

THE BLEND
by Beam Suntory

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WORKBOOK CHECKLIST

Now it's up to all of us! Our Refire speakers asked us a lot of questions and called out some important actions we can take to build a better future in our workplaces and communities. So let's strategize! This workbook was created as a space for reflection. The last page is great to print out and write on, or you can grab your favorite pen and notebook to journal your thoughts. Our hope was that bringing all of the information together might help build a guide to plan out the meaningful changes we all want to make. We can't wait to see what this community can do.

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Wages & Workers

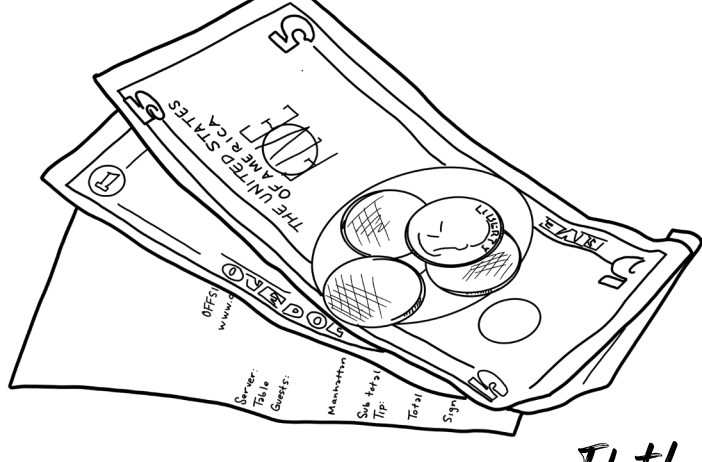
WITH **STEPHANIE LUCE**

As Loren Bornstein spoke to Stephanie Luce, they explored the history of labor and the working class, productivity, and the ways we get paid for our labor. The role of the worker in our country, and the power we have as individuals versus as a collective has changed over the years. People are paid less for doing much more, and workplaces can be unsafe and unjust. Stephanie covered the inherent racism of so many of our systems and the big political movements that it will take to change them.



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If the minimum wage had kept pace with productivity since the 1960s, it would be \$24 an hour today.

STEPHANIE LUCE

ORIGINS OF THE TIPPED WAGE

In the 1800s laborers worked from dawn to dusk without much regulation. Employees began fighting for a 12-hour work day, then a 10-hour work day, and eventually, through the enactment of the **Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA)**, the widely accepted 8-hour work day that we still have today. The FLSA also instituted a **federal minimum wage**.

Until 1938, employers were not required to pay tipped workers a base minimum wage, so workers only took home the tips that they earned. With the passing of the FLSA in 1938, employers were required to start compensating workers if they did not make enough tips during a shift to meet the federal minimum wage. Today, the federal minimum wage for tipped workers is **\$2.13; the same it has been since 1991**.

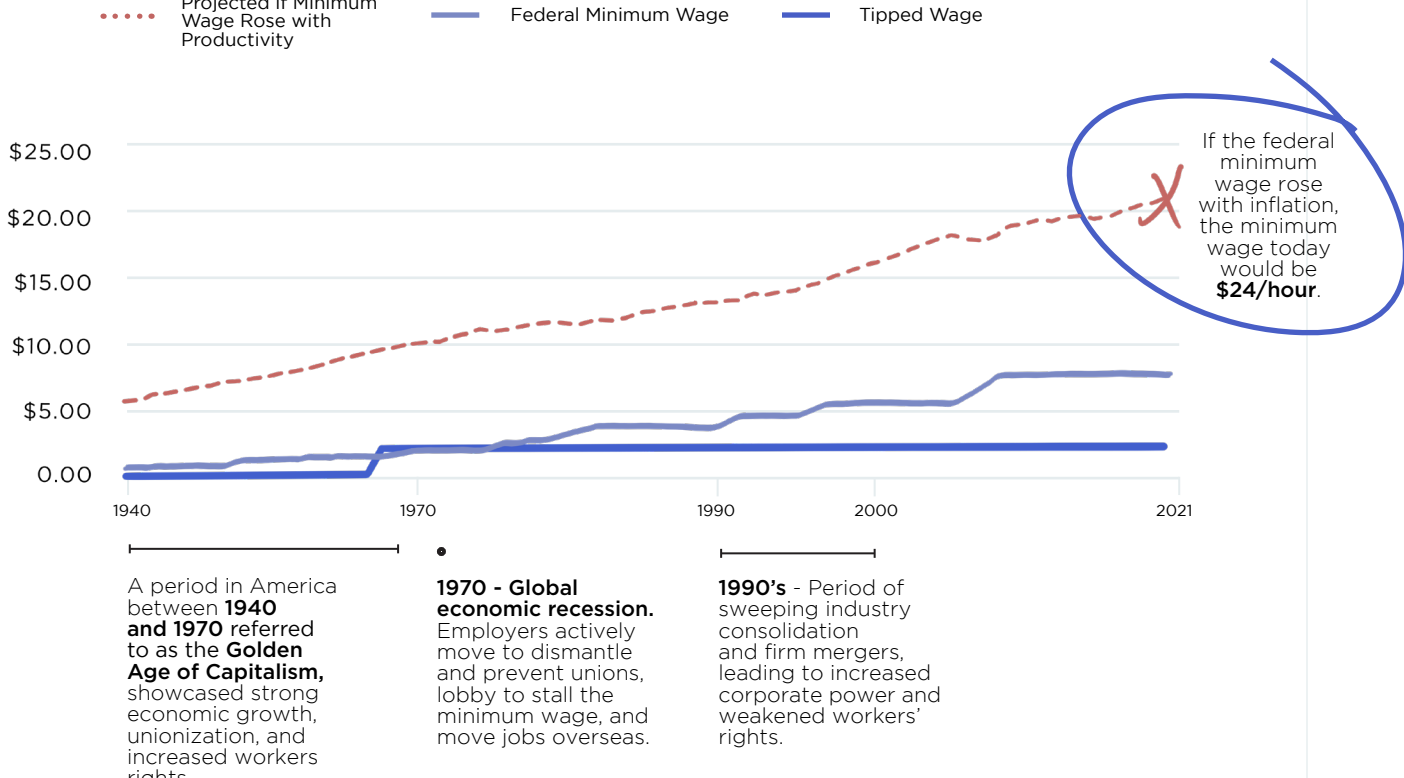
Americans began implementing modern day tipping practices at the same time Black Americans were beginning to enter the workforce after the Civil War. Black workers made up a large portion of the jobs in the service industry, and because of the near total reliance on tips, patrons were essentially deciding the compensation of these workers. This behavior drew parallels to the foundations of slavery: Black Americans working for others, and others deciding how - or if - they are rewarded.

The relics of these discriminatory practices are still present in hospitality today, with a large percentage of the industry's tipped workforce composed of Black and Latino employees. Statistically, these workers receive lower tips than their white counterparts. But the inequities Black and Latino workers face goes well beyond the tip line. Across the industry, there is a tremendous segregation of opportunity: glaringly white front of house staff versus predominantly Black and Latino back of house staff; inequitable scheduling practices; and discriminatory hiring are all examples of ways our industry limits opportunity.

FEDERAL MINIMUM WAGE STANDARDS

With the emphasis on work-life balance in the past century, worker productivity has increased, yet wages remain largely unchanged. The FLSA regulations have been in control of the federal minimum wage since 1938. States are welcome to increase the minimum wage above the federal minimum, but this varies from state to state, and 19 states are still following the federal minimum today in 2021.

Source: Economic Policy Institute's State of Working America Data Library



INEQUITIES AMONGST TIPPED-WAGE WORKERS

Across America there is a huge disparity amongst tipped hospitality workers - often tied to one's personal identities, where they work, and where they live. As Luce explains, "there's certainly a segment of tipped workers, particularly at the high-end restaurants or bars who do quite well from the tipping system," creating what she goes on to describe as a reality of "feast or famine." Some workers are getting more hours and thriving off the traditional tipping systems, while others find themselves working irregular shifts at multiple part-time jobs, all while barely scraping by. Lawmakers on the state level recognize this issue, and as a result, eight states have passed laws to eliminate the subminimum wage. In those states, tipping is still allowed, but workers are entitled to the same minimum wage as other workers. Employers have attempted to address this inequity by restructuring their internal tip systems (pooled house vs. unpooled house), or in some cases eliminating tipping altogether.

Action Plan

The first step to improving your working and workplace conditions, according to Luce, is to learn "as much as you can about workers' rights where you are." Talk to your coworkers (past and present), family, and friends to learn about their history with work, and the changes they'd like to see. As you have these important conversations, you have the power to champion the inherent "care work" that we do in hospitality: feeding and taking care of one another.

Learn about the rights that workers have in your area

Take the time to understand the changes that people need and would like to see

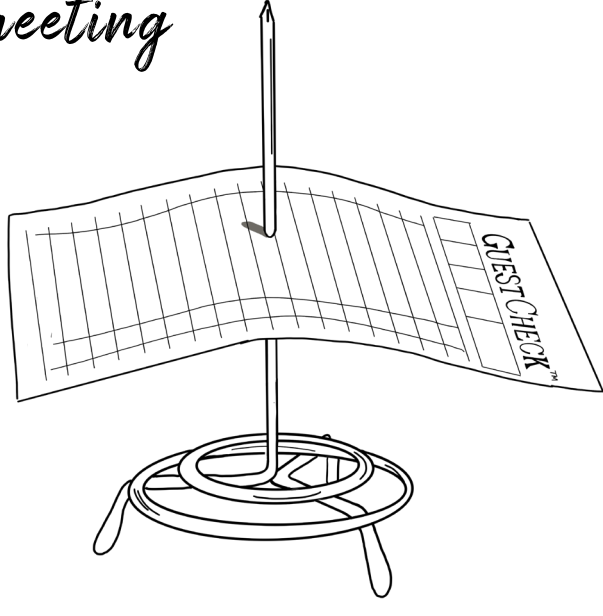
Take family and community history into consideration

Consider forming a union

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Instead of having an economy that's based on pursuing maximum profit, let's have an economy that's based on meeting human need.

STEPHANIE LUCE



EPISODE THREE

Wages & Workers

WORKSHEET

How would you describe your working conditions? Are you able to have candid conversations with your coworkers? Your managers?

Reflect on the structure of tipping. Are you more often in the “feast” category or “famine”? Journal on how each of those categories makes you feel. How do those feelings impact your work?

In what ways does your current workplace either support or conflict with wage equity? What conversations, if any, are taking place amongst staff?

If you are an owner or manager, how aware are you of wage inequities amongst your staff?

