

Please, Have a Pinch of Patience

A pinch of salt, a pinch of pepper, a pinch of parmesan, these are things that people tend to have a pinch of when they go out to a restaurant. The one thing that customers do not have a pinch of, however, is patience.

Who ever said you get what you give? Let me take a minute to tell you how mistaken you are. My job as a hostess at a restaurant is to seat customers. I stand at my podium all night, taking names, estimating wait times, asking questions, being as friendly as humanly possible. I smile at people; I act polite, and I speak in an appropriate manner. And yet when people come up and tell me how many they have in their party, as soon as I tell them how long they have to wait, they start the watch. If one stroke of a second passes the time I estimate, the world ends, and it's my fault.

"Where's my table?" "Are you ready for us yet?" "We have waited way too long!" and "Learn how to do your job!" These are just a few of the many things I am told when people have to wait longer than they anticipated. On one occasion, an old, rich man walked up to me, trying to show his money off to his way-too-young girlfriend. He offered me fifty bucks to be seated immediately. To my despair, I could not do that. If I'd dared to, the other customers would have had a fit. And oh, believe me, securing a table isn't the end of it. Once I get them a table, it's a whole new spiel: "We wanted a high top table," or "Can we have that table over there instead?" and "It's way too hot over here!" And so it goes.

From my standpoint, people go mad over the littlest things, just because they do not have any patience whatsoever. From their standpoint, I'm ridiculous to think that waiting five minutes is even remotely reasonable. I will not lie; I typically give nicer people the better table: the one

on the water, the one outside, the one with a nice view. It's all theirs. People who are rude, on the other hand, who use degrading comments, or yap on about how I should be better at my job, they get the little table in the back with just a view of the wall. It's all up to me, the hostess. So please, have a pinch of patience. For my sake-- and for yours.