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Lessons of a Dishwasher: Insights from Our 18-Year-Old Intern

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Efficiency is Key. In the dish pit, success means balancing the constant flow of dirty dishes with the restaurant's need for clean ones. Efficiency matters because dishwashing is one crucial part of a larger system—just like in any business. A slowdown in one area can disrupt the entire operation.

Details Matter. A single missed spot on a plate can sour a customer's experience and hurt the restaurant's reputation. It's a reminder that details are critical—not just in dishwashing, but in any job. The small things we might overlook can have a big impact on how we're perceived.

Empathy First. Treat others how you'd like to be treated. My time in the dish pit taught me that everyone has a story, whether it's a colleague working three jobs or a server studying for a better future. When I worked as a dishwasher, I had colleagues from Sri Lanka who were trained as engineers, but had to do manual labour seven days a week just to make ends meet. The lesson? Respect is universal, and it's worth striving to understand the journeys of those around us.

Embrace the Hard Work. Washing dishes means long hours on your feet, doing repetitive tasks. It's physically and mentally demanding. Yet, it taught me to appreciate the value of work that challenges you. It also showed me the importance of differentiation: many can handle physical labor, but not everyone can tackle the mental challenges that come with more complex roles.

In the end, I see my time as a dishwasher as a blessing. It wasn't glamorous, but it taught me real-world lessons that I'll carry forward into my role at Ewing Morris and in life.