

Eye on Del Norte: Is tipping out of control?

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With the new normal of eight to 10 percent annual inflation, record high gasoline and diesel prices, spiked-high grocery prices and the long-term effects and recovery from the COVID-19 virus, life has become increasingly more challenging as 2023 approaches. Contending with this economy is daunting.

Adding even more pressure on the middle class consumer is an undisputable spike on those who regularly give gratuities for services rendered. For those seeking clarification on tipping, here it is: Tipping is giving a gratuity, a sum of money, customarily given by a patron to a certain service sector such as hospitality for the service they perform, in addition to the basic price of the service. Tipping is always discriminatory and non-standardized.

Recently, I was ordering from a primarily pick-up only restaurant I patronize but shall remain unidentified. No entry into the establishment was permitted; I waited in my vehicle to have my order delivered. As I gave the server my credit card, the employee boldly asked me if I wished to include a tip.

“Absolutely not,” I answered back. “I’ve been coming to your restaurant for years for take out and have never given or worse yet, been asked to leave a tip. Why are you asking me for a gratuity for simply doing your job?”

The individual bringing me my order was speechless. I was furious. Was I being unreasonable? Worse yet, was I being cheap? Heaven forbid!

As a Baby Boomer, I was raised that tipping someone was done only for an extra effort, above and beyond one’s regular duties; that’s certainly not the case, today. Those who tip, do so for a very few reasons:

Future services offered.

Fear the recipient of your generosity. will be less than appreciative.

Showing off.

Sense of duty, obligation.

Tipping has expanded way out of control. Businesses have been reluctant to appreciably raise wages; one cannot blame business owners especially with high employee turnover. The federal government continues to aggravate entry level minimum wage employees, with unrealistic minimum wage requirements.

Government is the problem and major stimulator of this vicious cycle accessing its egregious share on the cost of labor and the ensuing pernicious inflation with deficit spending. All this chaos leads to the effective devaluation of your income.

Fully ingrained rampant inflation is an economic reality and foments high pressure to expand tipping way beyond its intended purpose.

Tipping is now almost everywhere, underappreciated and expected. Exception to the rule is Wal-Mart. The corporate giant does not permit a gratuity be given to any of its employees. Thank you for this exemplary policy, Wal-Mart.

Tipping is out of control but that does not mean your habits on tipping must also be chaotic. Don’t allow yourself to be intimidated by tipping. In this economy with government having real issues unquestionable spending, the consumer is the last resort. If you’re comfortable with a 10 percent or less gratuity, don’t be pressured to tip more than you’re complacent with. You have nothing for which to be embarrassed. It’s your money. Spend it wisely.

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