

My start-of-shift routine

Let me share my routine — the one I've followed for years, whatever hotel I'm running, and which is a personal choice for my own comfort, not anyone's obligation: what can be required is starting the shift ready and fully present, within your scheduled hours, with preparation organized as part of the working day. I come in with fifteen minutes to spare: the first five are for the changing room and the locker, unhurried; in there stay my personal phone and, with it, the pending call, the household bill and the rest of my world — I know that when I leave they'll be waiting for me exactly where I left them. The next five are for the uniform: a full check, paying special attention to shoes and hands (you'll find out why when we reach the lesson on grooming). And the last five are for the head: a mental run-through of what awaits me today and my doorway phrase — the gesture with which I leave the day outside before stepping on stage.

Now look at your comparison between the ideal routine and the real one. Almost everyone discovers the same thing: the difference isn't in the gestures — it's in the margin. The ideal routine needs a margin and the real one doesn't have it, and without a margin no mental locker works: you walk in dressed but not prepared. And here it's worth being clear: first check what time your working day really starts and which activities — changing, collecting equipment, taking the handover — are organized within it, because that is where they belong. Punctuality means joining your shift fully present at your time; it doesn't mean giving away work before it starts. If a personal margin helps you come in calm, that is your choice — voluntary, not required and not assessed. And if you find that the preparation required of you doesn't fit into how the working day is organized, that isn't solved by leaving home earlier: you report it to your manager, so the organization can correct it.

And hold on to the big idea of this lesson, because it is the foundation for the fifty that follow: the hotel will ask you for technique, method and judgment — but all of that rests on the decision you make every morning in front of your locker. **Attitude is not a lesson in this school: it is the condition for all the others.**
