

# Chef José Andrés: Fueling success and serving with passion

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## TRANSCRIPT

### SPEAKERS:

Wendy John | José Andrés

**Wendy John:** Welcome to another exclusive Fidelity Rewards event: Fueling Success and Serving with Passion. I'm thrilled to introduce today's guest, Chef José Andrés, an internationally recognized culinary innovator. He's been awarded Outstanding Chef and Humanitarian of the Year by the James Beard Foundation. He's a *New York Times* best-selling author, educator, television personality, humanitarian, and chef owner of ThinkFoodGroup, a pioneer of Spanish tapas in the United States. He was awarded the 2017 Lifetime Achievement award from the International Association of Culinary Professionals and the 2015 National Humanities Medal. And he's been named EY's master Entrepreneur of the Year in greater Washington for his leadership and impact on the global business community. I'm your host, Wendy John, and I'm Fidelity Investments' head of global diversity and inclusion. Thank you so much for joining us today. And welcome, José.

**José Andrés:** Thank you, thank you, Wendy, for having me today with you and all the Fidelity family, thank you.

**WENDY:** No problem. The pleasure is ours. And you know, José, we want to get the conversation going pretty quickly here. So I wonder if you could tell us about the start and evolution of your career from chef to humanitarian. How did you find and follow your passion?

**JOSÉ:** Well, I think, Wendy, I am one more guy that I was influenced by the different people that were part of my life. Like I'm sure all of you. And sometimes I realize, I'm 52 now, and I began telling stories like I'm a grandfather, at least that's what my daughters tell me, and I go back in time and I began having those images in my brain on those people that even sometimes for some reason I forgot about them. They had a huge impact in the person I am. All of us, we have those people. A teacher who was the nicest person just helping us with mathematics when we were having trouble. Those moments of empathy that many people gave us in the form also not only of love and respect but of knowledge.



My mom and my dad were in many ways those people for me. In many ways it was the same like probably many of us sometimes, I had ups and downs in the relationship with my mom and my dad. But forever—they're no longer with me—but I will be grateful because cooking. My mom and my dad were nurses. But we would always be cooking at home. Going to a restaurant when I grew up in Spain in the '70s was not an option. There were working family. We did okay. But for us was going to the market almost every day. I would go for the bread every day. My mom and my father would go to buy the fruit for the next two, three days. The fish. You only went to buy the fish the day you were eating fish. The meat. You would buy the meat the day you were eating meat. This is very much what was. Watching my mom and my dad cooking. My mom will be more on Monday through Friday cook. My father will be more the let's invite everybody home weekend cook. My mother show me that even the most bad-looking leftovers could make the most delicious meals, croquetas, the bechamel fritter that she will put the little piece of chicken left for a week in the refrigerator and a half egg halfway dry. Oh my God, I remember those croquetas. My father will make this big paella. My father will make sure I help him with the fire. I will gather the wood in the forest. He will always be inviting friends. My mother will be always worried because how many people did you invite? He will invite almost all the hospital, and my father will say, "I don't know, I lost count." And my mom would like how you lost count? How many? I'm like, "Don't worry, if more people come, I will add only more rice to the pan." My father put me making the fire. I got one day very upset because I wanted to do the cooking, not the fire. He sent me away. He got me at the end of the meal when everybody ate without my help and told me, "My son, everybody wants to do the cooking, but the most important thing is making the fire and controlling the fire. If you do that you can do any cooking you want." This was going to tell me was a great lesson for a young cook in the making. But I realized that this was an amazing metaphor for life.

This is what got me into cooking. I was able to work with some of the best chefs back growing up in Spain, in France. And I saw the beauty of food just to have a way to a young boy finding his place in the world, a place to belong. I did military service in the Spanish navy. I was in a training ship, foremast, sailing across the Atlantic Ocean. It's first time I saw Africa, first time I saw South America, the Caribbean, first time I came to the United States of America. I saw the power of 300 people working in a ship together against the winds, against the currents, being able to go anywhere you wanted if you work together as we the people. And to me this was a fascinating moment in my life because I learned the power of the team. And when I came America, I went New York. I was a young cook. I began learning in the streets of Manhattan. The university of life. The melting pot, I could learn about every cooking, not only regional American cooking, but any cooking in the world was present in New York City. The melting pot helping a young cook like me learning without having to visit faraway countries for me was an amazing learning following what I learned with my mom and my dad and cooking school back in Barcelona. And then I arrived DC. I opened my first restaurant Jaleo. Thirty years later I have 30.

But few things happened on my humanitarian side that a young organization called DC Central Kitchen. I joined when I was 24, 25, I met the founder Robert Egger. He had a brilliant idea. Thirty-five years ago Ronald Reagan inauguration day, he saw there was always food being wasted, in

parties, in hotels. He got all that food and brought it to kitchen near the Capitol. But everybody talks about food waste, he was talking about what's really important, wasting people's lives. He began getting homeless out of the street. Cleaning them, giving them a place to belong. Ex-convicts. Having a hard time finding a job. He will bring the untouched food, so-called wasted, but got those people that needed a place to belong, rightfully so. He began training them to be cooks. In the process they will lead the cooking of thousands of meals, giving dignity to these people, giving them a place to belong. Training them to be cooks so restaurants like me can hire them. Making sure that food was not being wasted and in the process feeding the hungry in Washington, DC. I became, I was a volunteer, I ended being the chairman. In the process I learned what Robert Egger told me the day I met him, that philanthropy thinks it's about the redemption of the giver when philanthropy must be about the liberation of the receiver. With those lessons, my friend, is when, and seeing how food had the power to give dignity to people and improve communities. When Haiti 2010 earthquake happened and already by watching what happened in Katrina in New Orleans where thousands of Americans were forgotten in the Superdome, when was actually very simple problem. If we went there we could start feeding people within an hour. But we didn't. Because we didn't have the response that was simple and efficient. When Haiti happened, I landed in Dominican Republic. I went to Haiti. I joined a couple of camps with refugees that lost their homes and family members. And I didn't go to help as much as to learn. I began seeing that cooks like me that feed the few, we could also again be part of feeding the many, especially in emergencies. And this is how at the end I went from having the life of a chef and a cook, I cook for my family, I cook for my friends, I cook for my—I'm with my guests and my teams. But I cook for the few. But I learned that also I could be part of being in the conversation of cooking for the many, of giving hope to the people that sometime have none in emergencies or in everyday American cities. That's how I went from being a young boy to being a cook to be call it a humanitarian.

**WENDY:** Well, thank you so much for bringing us along on that journey, and you were probably seeing me nodding along the way. We have so many things in common. So I am originally from Trinidad and Tobago in the Caribbean. And as you know for so many, food. Right? I keep telling people I grew up where people were constantly offering you food, because people who don't have so much, what they have is what they have made. And just that resourcefulness of using every, every aspect and piece of fruit, of vegetables, of animals, etc. And my mother was a nurse, and my father was the one who was the social butterfly bringing people to the house every weekend. So there were constantly people in our home and still to this day I joke that I don't know how to cook for like one person or four people because we were always cooking for so many. And just getting very creative with leftovers. So it was just wonderful for me personally to be hearing you bring all of those connections. I first knew about you and the work you were doing with ThinkFoodGroup, which is the restaurant group. And then started to hear more about this nonprofit World Central Kitchen. But I didn't make the connection to you, and let me tell you how I became aware of World Central Kitchen. So prior to starting in the role that I have today as the head of global diversity and inclusion, last year, at the start of the pandemic I actually was in a different role. I was the chief administrative officer for Fidelity Charitable, which is an independent public charity with a mission of improving how Americans—the American tradition of philanthropy,

to help it grow by providing programs that make charitable giving accessible, simple, and effective. So it's a donor-advised fund. But the reason I bring that up is because last year in the early months of the pandemic we saw record-breaking levels of giving from our Fidelity Charitable donors, much of it going to programs to address food scarcity. So several food banks. But then World Central Kitchen kept popping up on our radar. I have a quote from you related to the formation of World Central Kitchen. And you shared that, "We envisioned an organization that would use food to empower communities and strengthen economies. And for many years we saw an amazing impact through our clean cookstoves initiative, culinary training programs, and social enterprise ventures. But we had no idea we would one day be answering calls in Puerto Rico and around the world to serve meals in the aftermath of disaster, and we quickly learned that food is a powerful tool to heal communities in times of crisis and beyond." You just mentioned Haiti. And so again if we go back to last year, 2020, I imagine, I'm projecting here, that you didn't imagine World Central Kitchen playing the role that it has played, had to play, and has played throughout the COVID pandemic. So could you tell us a little bit about that experience and how you actually identified and acted on the opportunity and what you've learned?

**JOSÉ:** Well, in a way I didn't thought that we were going to become one of the probably NGOs that has grown the most around the world in the shortest period of time. At least over the last 10 years. But especially over the last four. And especially over the last year and a half. But when I call it World Central Kitchen, you can understand that I already was having intentions of saying I must be in other parts of the world. In this pandemic at one moment we were doing close to 475,000 meals a day. Why an NGO that was not supposed to be there, an NGO that only was doing what we do because people support us with small donations, \$1 at a time, and where sometimes we go into catastrophes without any budget in the bank to pay for them? Well, because we realized that we must be there next to the people. Especially in catastrophes. Obviously you will see World Central Kitchen within in the fires in California. In September alone I landed in Haiti that for me unfortunately was bittersweet. Was bitter because a lot of people lost their homes, some people died when this last earthquake hit the southern part of Haiti. But was a sweet moment because I saw how much we learned in the last 11 years. Was not anymore the young boy going to learn how to do organization that we can feed people in emergencies. I was going already to a country I'd been many times. I have in my passport so many times I've been to Haiti. So people are there made foundation already. It's a country I love. It's a country I've done a documentary trying to bring tourists into the country. We have a training program for young women so they can train to be cooks and find jobs and the hopefully growing tourism of Haiti. We have the clean cooking in many schools. We have some investment in farming. Next to the farmers in forgotten rural areas. When this earthquake, we were ready, because we had a team, we had people, we had Haitians were our friends. We were able to be within hours be delivering to mountaintops, forgotten communities, food and more construction. We were rebuilding ovens within days of the ovens being broken down by the earthquake. We were helping sailors with boats and other equipment that was somehow damaged during the earthquake. We began doing things, not only feeding, but in the process, in the aftermath doing reconstruction. From there we went to New Orleans. I watched from the comfort of my home what happened in Katrina. Within hours I was able, eight

hours before the New Orleans last hurricane in September, we landed. We were already there with a team. We were able within hours be feeding tens of thousands of people. I was able to go to [Lonai?] to make sure that people were not forgotten anymore. I was able to go to Little Caillou, to Houma, to Lafitte. We show up within 24 hours of the hurricane asking them, "What do you need? We are here ready with food, what else can we do for you? We will keep coming back every day." So this organization we've been in places like India doing 97 hospital in 17 cities. We were in Lebanon in Beirut after the big explosion doing 20,000 meals a day with the help of 10 restaurants across the perimeter where the big explosion occurred giving food to nurses, to doctors, hospitals, first responders, the military, volunteers. So who is going to tell me that World Central Kitchen obviously, we don't plan we say. I think if anything we learn in this pandemic. But this is something I always believe. I'm not the guy that likes plans. I'm a guy that lives every hour, every minute. And I think with overplanning. It's true in certain things in life in the big picture it's okay to do planning. Financial planning is very important. But if you overplan and you don't learn to be comfortable outside the plan when things don't go as planned, you collapse. Your team collapses. Why? Because they've been trying to follow a plan. Not to adapt to the situation, to embrace complexity of the moment. Adaptation will always beat planning. It's okay to plan certain things. But let's all be ready to adaptation. To, in our case, when some emergency happens, a fire, an earthquake, a hurricane, a volcano explosion like happened the other day in Spain in La Palma where I went there with my team to be feeding people that lost their homes, almost 20,000 people without homes in that beautiful island in the Atlantic Ocean. In my case when something happens, when mayhem happens, for certain people they freeze. I can understand why. But when you train your teams to see that those mayhem moments are the opportunities to serve, everything changes. And fortunately we prepare ourselves to make out of chaos and darkness create organization and bring light. And when you start seeing the world in such a way, every moment is an opportunity to make something great out of something that may be wrong. And that's what we try to do every day of our lives. We put plans aside. We adapt. We are not so much about hardware. We are about software. What that means, that traditional organizations will be waiting let's say in our case for the kitchens and the food trucks and the food and the—this is hardware. In a hurricane you can lose all of that. Why? Because it is material. But you know what you can never lose, the software. The software is your brain. The software is your heart and your empathy. Your software is your willingness to make things happen. Software will always be more powerful than hardware. We use software before hardware. That's why every situation for us we can serve. In Bahamas 80,000 people lost their home when Dorian hit 14 islands. I landed in the 14 islands in within 48 hours. We reached 80,000 meals within 10 days. Every day we delivered to every man and woman. Why we did it? I'm sure we had hardware. But what we had was the software. If we waited for the kitchens and equipment and we didn't use our brains and say, "The only way to do this, people, is with helicopters and seaplanes." We didn't hesitate, we didn't wait, we didn't even have money in the bank to pay for all of that. But we did it because was the only way to be next to the people of Bahamas. This way we were able to feed everybody in a way nobody even was ready to. We landed. We made it. We began making medical evacuations. We began bringing solar lights. We began bringing water purification systems so they could purify seawater in a moment that was

hard to get fresh water to everyone. You see, software is really what made us be good and fast. We never wait for the hardware. We adapt to whatever we have in the areas we're trying to help.

**WENDY:** Well, I love it. I actually was going to ask you a question about lessons learned, but for the folks that are viewing and that are taking notes, here's what I heard. Software is better than hardware. Sorry, and apologies to our technology folks that build hardware. But software --

**OSÉ:** We need them.

**WENDY:** Software will be your go-to. You shared about needing and the value of being able to thrive in ambiguity. And not being too scripted. Allowing for the unexpected is what I heard you say. And threading in through there you talked about the greatness of the team. And it occurs to me that as you've talked about going to different geographical locations, you must have, and this is my world that I work in, but you must have a pretty diverse team that you're working with, and diversity across many, many spectrums. So I'm actually going to ask you a question about that. Leading teams can be very challenging. I believe in diverse teams and believe that diverse teams produce better outcomes. But that doesn't mean that diverse teams and working with diverse teams is easy. The reason human beings gravitate to creating teams that look like them and think like them is because that's easier. So tell me a little bit about what you've learnt about leadership of diverse teams and maybe if there's some things that you think are the magic. I'm going to use a food analogy. Tell us the secret sauce of having teams that can react and respond and turn crisis into opportunity.

**OSÉ:** I think what you are, Wendy, describing is right. That humanity, we're strange, we're not any sometimes different species than other animals, that they seem to gather with their group of animals. We gather with our group of tribes who think like us, religious, because that's how we grew up or the color of our skin or our accent. That's humanity. But in emergencies you see how this diversity may be working for helping you solve situations. In our case like this white boy shows up in an island called Providencia in Colombia that is being devastated, totally devastated by a hurricane. Iota. We land there in the middle of nowhere. And you argue, "Okay, what I'm going to be doing? Mac and cheese?" Food is one of the amazing melting pots. Oh, we're going to be doing things that is what people have there and people like. In Haiti, what meals we make? We make dishes that they are traditional Haitian. Not because I'm trying to do that because it's a nice thing to do but because it's what you have around. You're going to say, "What has to do food with diversity of teams?" Everything. Was a French philosopher that says, "Tell me what you eat and I will tell you who you are." What we cook, what we eat, and who we are is a very powerful thing when you put them together. Because behind the food there is people. And what people bring with that is the knowledge of where they live, is their history, is their culture, is to maximize sometimes in times of emergencies, to maximize to try to feed their families with whatever they have at hand. And there is where you see the resourcefulness of having a team that comes from different backgrounds some parts, and where everybody brings their knowledge. When I come with my teams from the outside in our World Central Kitchen team we have people from different



countries, different parts of America, different parts of the world. I didn't chose them, they chose themselves. When we went to Indonesia to help feed people after a typhoon and then an earthquake hit back to back to back and a tsunami, we were cooking traditional Indonesian dishes. But important was not what we were cooking. The important is that we almost were doing human resources at the same time because some amazing people happen pop up out of nowhere that made us be better resourceful helping in an Indonesian country that we never served before. So what happens is that I may come from the outside to a place that looks far away from me like Haiti first time I went. And I was trying to make these black beans in the Spanish boy white boy way. And while these families were hungry they came with me with the help of a translator and they were very thankful that I was managing to cook in the middle of nowhere for 300 people, but they were trying to tell me, "You know one thing, we don't eat the beans this way. We make them into a puree and we smash them, and we don't like floating things in the sauce. We like a smooth sauce, like it was a French fancy restaurant." Inside me I was like, "What the heck is wrong with these people?" One part of me, I learned a lesson that to the aid you provide really be helpful, cannot be given in the way you think is best for them. Dignity is something everybody deserves, people don't want our pity, want our respect. How you give respect? Obviously you are there to help them and they really appreciate. But you give respect by listening to them, locals know best. They know their ways. They know what's good for them, for the children, for the community. This for me was a huge lesson when 11 years ago that happened to me in the middle of nowhere that those families that while hungry they had their dignity. They knew how they wanted their black beans with the rice to be eaten. I didn't listen to them, they took charge of the situation on their own hands. This is how you build diverse teams. Not because you are forcing to have people from different backgrounds or skin color or religions. But you try to do it in an unforceful way. It's only when you build longer tables, not higher walls, and you let everybody join and do what they know best. That's why in many of the situations or if you follow World Central Kitchen you will see how many men and women almost like if we were journalists are giving on-site report of what's going on in the many different missions that we are helping. And you will see diversity in the people delivering those message, but more important you will see diversity in the people helping us having a very big response. The different cities across America and across the world that we are trying to help. We provide the longer table where everybody is welcome. Not only to bring who they are but to feel that they have the dignity they deserve because they are there to be helped but more often than not they are there to help their fellow citizens. That's what I've been trying to build all these years.

**WENDY:** Yeah. I love even just the visual of the longer table and then the reinforcement about the fact that even those in need deserve dignity. So we're entering into the period of the year where everyone is thinking, I'm sure many in the audience, about it's we're coming off of the heels especially in the U.S. of the Thanksgiving holiday. People are hopefully in a place of gratitude and looking to give back. What's some advice you have beyond—you gave us already some really good ones about particularly preserving dignity and thinking about what aid the audience that you're serving needs, not what you think they need. But what other advice would you give to this audience about as they consider how to give back?

**JOSÉ:** Wendy, I think I mentioned that phrase before from Robert Egger that philanthropy must be not about the redemption of the giver but about the liberation of the receiver. Don't misunderstand me. It's nothing wrong of giving. But obviously as many people listening to us and the many team members you have with you on this call, in the same way we advise your people, you advise your people about having a smart investment so they can multiply their money, I'm a Christian boy, I always use the fish and loaves, everybody can use in the world the same, it's how you multiply the goodness of the earth. In this case the hard-earned money with your sweat and time that you are trying to put there for the future, for you, your retirement, your loved ones, for the unexpected. You guide them to make a smart investment. As should be. To multiply. For profit. When we give to philanthropy in a philanthropic way, we should have exactly the same hand. We should have the hand of what is the return on the investment to my community. Because we have many challenges we face that government should be providing through our leaders many of the solutions. But they do believe that we cannot leave everybody, everything just to our politicians. Well, in Washington, in our cities, in our states. It's the role of everybody to make a better society, a better democracy. Nothing is perfect. We all know that we must work hard to keep making the wrongs better and having in the case of America a more perfect union. But in the case of the world a better planet that we all share equally the goodness that the earth gives. But I sincerely believe that the philanthropic money that people give with their hard work they put, and the good heart and empathy, we must be using the same mentality and asking ourselves, "I am really having a return on investment. I am really helping my community to be better. I'm really investing into organization that does great education for young girls. I am really investing in organization that doesn't only feed the hungry but that empowers the hungry to be learning a profession so they can on their own make it." People don't want our pity, people want our respect. And the way to give them respect is making sure that we put our dollars to work for the issues you want to solve and for the people you want to help. You need to ask yourself, "I am getting the right return on investment." And if you don't see a clear answer, you must look for another organization until you find the organizations that really you feel they deliver in a real way with real actions that you can see its successes. So, all these philanthropic dollars that America and the world gives can really help us make one decision at a time, one investment at a time, one organization at a time, one person at a time better communities that we will all be proud of.

**WENDY:** Yeah. Well, thank you so much for that. You've now embedded that quote in my head. Not for the redemption of the giver but for the liberation of the receiver. So thank you to our audience for all the wonderful questions that were submitted at registration. We'll get to as many as possible. Again we always love hearing from our clients directly. So I'll tell you, José, there was a great question just building on all of the work that you do around natural disasters there. But really it was about how do you continue to have the energy to make each large-scale humanitarian crisis. It seems as if you have no breaks going from one hurricane to another and you're doing a lot of these during a global pandemic. So what do you do in the interim between these experiences that sustains you? Anything that you could share.



**JOSÉ:** Well, listen, I said I think at the beginning of this conversation we are who we are thanks to the people we have around us. Me, I have an amazing wife that I don't know how she still is around after 28 years. I have three great daughters who give me so much support when I'm supposed to be their dad giving support to them. Friends that they are more for me there than I am for them. And at the end I'm very blessed with all those things. And I think it's the role of everybody just to be remembering that we are who we are thanks to those people that in a very unselfish way they give us more than we can ever give them. So this for me is very important because gives me the opportunity obviously to do what I do. Obviously my teammates in my company. I always say that I may be the boss but I don't like to think of my company as a pyramid where I sit at the top. I like to think like my organization is flatter where I'm not the boss or nobody is the boss by the title behind their door but by their actions and with the boots on the ground. And by having a flat organization everybody sharing that open space can contribute quicker and faster than if you create a pyramid. So for me those are important cornerstones of how I do what I do. Obviously I lost 78 pounds in this pandemic. Which has given me a renewal. I'm 52. Energy. We all need to think like we don't need to be thinking about losing weight because we need to look nicer in the mirror but because we are going to feel so much better and we're going to last so much more and we're going to feel so much more empowered to be there, to enjoy the good moments that life still is going to be giving us in the form of friends, in the form of celebrations, in the form of enjoying our friends and our family and the new members of families that will come for the years to come. So for me all this has very very important but obviously nothing gives me more joy and I cannot help it as becoming for me almost like a drug to—I don't go to every emergency. I have restaurants to run, I have family to attend, I have other obligations, I teach in universities, in Harvard and in George Washington. And I don't teach because I know much about anything. I teach because I like to learn, believe it or not. But I'm teaching in George Washington. We have the Food Institute we're trying to create to shape the future of America about food issues in a very comprehensive way by bringing every school and every dean into the platform seeing that food is in the middle of a very complex system that if we bring everything, immigration and national security and health and fighting hunger and pop culture and history, we can solve the many challenges that food is presenting in front of us. But where I get all this energy. Every time I go to class and I see the difference you can make by showing up. Forget about the food itself. That sometimes people only want to see that somebody is remembering them in the darkest hour. And unfortunately very often those are the poorest of the poor. Those are people living in the most difficult cities or neighborhoods or countries. And that in the darkest hour you are there trying to bring a little bit of light. This is what probably keeps me going. I enjoy a good life, believe me, I have a good time, I go to restaurants, I cook with friends, when I can I play golf and I go on vacation like everyone else. Nobody, I don't—should feel guilty for doing those. But I learn that every time I come I will put my schedule aside and I will leave things that maybe are super important because for me will always be something more important. I cannot feed every person is hungry right now on planet earth. But I'm trying to learn how World Central Kitchen and others in the years to come we can be smarter about how we can one day claim that no child will be ever hungry again in America. That no woman will be ever hungry again in the world. And for me going to these things is no so much that I help. For me it's that I keep learning. By listening how I can, how we all can do a better job. So we stop clapping

when we announce we are ending world hunger. And we stop clapping less and being next to the people that need our help more. With boots on the ground we will make it happen. Just speeches like I'm doing right now or clapping is not going to make it on its own. We need to be next to the people, especially the people that needs us the most. That's why I keep going. That's what keeps me going.

**WENDY:** Yeah, well, thank you so much for sharing that. And in the back of my head I can literally hear my father talking about the importance of showing up. Even if you're not fully prepared and you don't have all the answers sometimes just showing up, you don't know the difference that that will make to the folks that are expecting you or that are reliant on you. There was an interesting question here. I think we've talked a lot about areas where you have been very successful. So there's a question around your personal journey in terms of have you ever had a moment where you doubted yourself. And what advice would you give to others who might be questioning their own abilities?

**JOSÉ:** I think was Winston Churchill who said—he was describing the meaning of success. And I think we all want to be successful. Doesn't matter what it is. Can be in a basketball game. Can be that you planted some roses in your backyard or cabbage. Can be at work. Can be with your family. Can be winning a lottery ticket. Success. Whatever is success. Something that makes us happy. But Winston Churchill said that success was going from failure to failure without losing enthusiasm. Things are going to happen. Because usually we try to aim higher. Sometimes we never get to that higher point we are dreaming. And we think we are not enjoying the journey because really we have our eyes on that peak mountain of success that is still far away and we are killing ourselves trying to get there. And we are not really taking any time to look around and enjoy the journey. And realize that more important than achieve that place that you think is what equals success and happiness, you forget that what maybe equals success and happiness is just be aware of the moment you are living and the people you have around you and the people you're sharing that moment that maybe it's not perfect, maybe it's a hard time, maybe you are having a hard time that month to pay all the bills, maybe you are having a personal issue because your family or because yourself. But I think sometimes we need to stop down, look around. Maybe look ourselves in the mirror and say, "I am who I am, and that should be enough." And is about enjoying yourself. We try to enjoy the company of others, what about enjoying ourselves? I'm far away from perfect on that. I'm sometimes very grumpy because I want perfection, because I want—and this is probably not one of my best moments when I get grumpy. And I have friends that put me in my grumpiness. Hey, stop it. It's okay to understand that you are aware that your imperfections are also part of who you are and that it's not something you should be ashamed of but yeah, we should learn how to control them and make them better. But that's not something needs to completely bring you down but something that gives you the opportunity and the challenge just to be better. To become the better of yourself. To put out of our worst demons and bring out of our best angels. And remember that you never do it alone. Even everybody should be—obviously—be their own person. Remember that you will always have people around you. That if you build those bridges and you let them come into yourself as you are I'm sure part of

them, things are much better. We are not islands. We are huge continents that if we want we can shake hands, we can build bridges, we can build longer tables. And then we feel alone no more. And you remember that whatever you're going through probably the person right and left of you they're going through the same or worse. So open yourself up because it's going to bring you a lot of comfort knowing that we are not alone in this. Life is a wonderful thing that also has its challenges. But you know what, every challenge is an opportunity rise above. We will never maybe make it to the mountain we are dreaming. But instead of looking at the peak of the mountain you should look around you. You look at your feet and you start one step at a time. And you enjoy that moment that can be just the sand in between your fingers walking in a beach or the water in a river. That this is the path of your life. Man, enjoy those moments and just forget. The sunset and the sunrise is always going to be there. But what is going to really be there is what's around you, what is near you. That's who you are. Just make sure you are aware of that. And you will find more good than not. It's always around you, just you need to look for it.

**WENDY:** Yeah. Well, as a perfectionist in reform—that is actually how I describe myself—I can relate to a lot of what you're saying in terms of just sometimes when you are raised in a way, if you're raised in an achievement household or you're trying to just always strive to do better, we can be hard on ourselves along the journey and you need to give yourself some grace and some space and time to refocus and just to your point look around you. Well, a lot of folks might be looking around themselves right now and thinking about they're not Chef José Andrés. They may not have the ability to stand up a World Central Kitchen. Any suggestions for how to get involved both with World Central Kitchen, maybe even with the Food Institute that you mentioned, to really make a difference in the world?

**JOSÉ:** I'm sure we have people from different parts in different cities from across America, probably some from across the world. And I will say it's always sometimes we don't need to start new things. Sometimes we only need to join others. Me, I learned long time ago that sometimes maybe I had to lead by the front but sometimes I had to lead by the back. And equal are as important. But just look within yourself what's really important to you. Maybe because you growing up went through some hardships and you say, "I'm going to make sure nobody goes through this hardship." Or maybe because it's something that you saw while reading a book or somebody told you or you saw on TV on social media. I want to make sure that this and this doesn't happen ever again or that we can improve hope for these people live in jail that seem nobody's ever ever to give them a job because they've been in jail. And sometimes you learn that some people go jail because it's a lottery ticket. That some of us we get away and others you send for 10 years and that's unfair. It's many of situations that you have expertise to help others. And many people tell me, "Well, José, you can cook for everybody and make." I don't know what your profession is but I'm sure it's something within you, in who you are, in what you know that can be helping others move away from the hole they are. And that's what you need to look for. Can be a soup kitchen. But can be providing training to convicts that need to learn a profession so when they leave they can start looking at the future with hope. Or can be financial advisers that help young families that have no clue how to prepare for the future. When I was young I didn't have the clue. And you set

them for success with the right decisions early in their lives and savings. It's better to invest than to rent. It's many talents I'm sure is in this call right now that everybody needs to find what really excites them and then find the organizations that allow you to be part of that solution. Obviously money is always a good way to collaborate. But as important is with your knowledge and your time as a volunteer. And find what really kicks with you because it's how you're going to show your best when you're trying to provide those services and share that expertise you bring to the table with others. And it's great organizations are there. It's only you need to find the one that really is near where you live that really you feel you are part of and you are helping make a difference. And sometimes you don't find it the first time. That's fine. Just keep searching. No need for another job but you keep searching until you find the job that really excites you and sometimes that excitement goes away, well, you'll find another one. This is the same with philanthropy and charity. Just find what excites you because it's when you're going to show your best. And you keep going until you really find a way that you can help spread yourself through your volunteerism or through your donations and that gives you a great way to make your community a little bit better with your contributions. That's what I will do if I was you.

**WENDY:** Fantastic. So I have two last questions that were submitted by members of the audience and I love both of them actually. So one is have you thought about how we build a long-term system for healthy food production and delivery in the U.S.'s food deserts or elsewhere. And how much of the problem is imagination versus profitability?

**JOSÉ:** Wow. I just came from visiting, yesterday I was on the Hill. And I was able to speak to senators and Congresswoman Speaker Pelosi. And precisely we were talking about that. In whatever free time I have I learn that being next to our leaders is important because they are always looking for ideas and especially more ideas that they've been proven. The last food conference happened bringing food issues of America in 1969 during President Nixon. Many great ideas happened in that conference, but was over 52 years ago. Things like SNAP came out of what is the supplemental food stamps as we—many good ideas came that provide Americans that sometimes like can happen to all of us fall behind a safety net. But time change. And becomes more sophisticated. And things that were good 50 years ago, maybe they are not so practical. So we've been asking to the White House to lead this conference that we can build on what has worked. We can bring few new ideas that need implementation and that we put aside what doesn't work anymore. I do believe that food is a great way to make America prosper and move forward. We show it with the 3,000 restaurants that World Central Kitchen partner with. We were able to channel the donations we were getting through those restaurants. Why? Because we were proving a concept. In emergencies, who better than restaurants and chefs to feed people in need? So if that money that comes to feed the people in need, to feed the hungry, doesn't only achieve that goal but does more than that, it's able to keep the restaurants open, keep the restaurants pay rent, keep the cooks paid, keep the farmers making a living and earning by selling the produce and the fish, all of a sudden you don't only throw money at the problem, which is feeding the hungry, but you invest into the solutions. You feed the hungry as you keep the economy running. We've been talking about that Congress should do more of that. The FEED Act kind of pause a little bit but

we're trying to hope with bipartisan support. Initially I got Tim Scott from South Carolina, Senator Tim Scott, and senator back then Kamala Harris, that they supported the FEED Act. You see food brings Americans together. Food deserts. How is a woman—sometimes unfortunately they're the ones that pay the price of having a growing family. And if you have a single mother with three, four children with difficulty working in one job because doesn't have enough money even to have child care and she has to decide between food or health or child care, it's good that we give that woman that is working hard to raise not only a family but to help the economy with her work that she lives in a community that already itself may be poor, that doesn't even have a place to buy food near where she's living, those communities look very poor. And I don't mean literally poor, but you go and it's like what's happening here. It's not one store open. It's not one little diner or restaurant. So if that woman has to spend her money 20 miles away, 20 minutes away, in another part of town that is richer, why we don't make sure that those food stamps are, by ending food deserts, is spent in her community? Where then all of a sudden you have farmers that come and somebody that can open a little business selling you fruits and vegetables or selling you beans and rice. And all of a sudden a little restaurant open. A diner. Where this woman if we make SNAPs not only to buy food in markets but also why not if she's working all day and needs to feed the children, and buying some meals that she can take home and make sure that it's not a person that is completely destroyed after a long time work? We've all been there. If we start doing this you see the same money we give through SNAPs food stamps to help feed that family, all of a sudden that money doesn't go just to throw into the problem but help us end food deserts, help us open little markets, help us open little diners and restaurants and food trucks. All of a sudden that community that looks sad and gray, all of a sudden looks happy and hopeful. You see it's many things like this. Why schools in America has no kitchens that look like a kitchen? They're just places to reheat bags of food that doesn't even look like food anymore. And it's nothing wrong to have food in a bag. But a kitchen should be a kitchen, why we don't build kitchens in every school across America? That then when you have an emergency you can use that kitchen when the school becomes a shelter. I've been in kitchens that we couldn't use in schools when they were the shelter. Because they didn't have the kitchen that we could cook anything. And we had to bring the food from far away. But you have a kitchen in the school, you can buy local food, you can buy from local farmers, you can feed your children better. Push for vegetables, fruit. Making sure that the food we feed our children makes them better and stronger, not just sicker. And all of a sudden we train women and men that maybe they have a hard time finding jobs in the rural communities or the suburban communities. We train them to be great cooks. They have pride in feeding their local community. The children of tomorrow. All of a sudden you create jobs not only by the hundreds of thousands of people you will hire. You don't throw money at the problem but you invest in creating jobs, you invest in giving people hope. You buy from the local farmers. You feed your children better food. Everybody's healthier. Means we don't have a health care cost that is so ever growing. All of a sudden that money instead of fixing Americans when we get sick goes in investing to give option and a chance to Americans to achieve the American dream every day of their lives. You see this is one few of the many ways we can make sure that food becomes—stops being part of the problem. And where food once and for all starts being the solution. This is some of the many ways. I'm one more man but there's many good people out there trying with those ideas. Because I have a lot of passion in the things I do. You

will see me speaking often about those issues and trying to make sense of what it seems is a very complex problem but that actually is not so complex. That's why I wanted to do the Food Institute, to transform complexity into simplicity, and to show that to fix the problems we have we need to be smart, thinking 360, three-dimensional, and saying that yes, we can end food deserts, yes, we can end hunger, yes, we can end obesity, yes, we can create jobs, yes, we can be helping rural America to be richer. Yes, food can be the solution. This is what people like me we're trying to do.

**WENDY:** Well, José, thank you. You answered both of those questions wonderfully and I know I'm leaving inspired. So thank you for joining us today. And to the audience, thank you for tuning in. In my role, leading diversity and inclusion at Fidelity, I have the honor and privilege of working every day to ensure we're cultivating a culture of inclusion and creating a workplace where diverse perspectives are welcome and valued. Through our work in supporting our customers achieve financial wellness and meet their financial goals, and also in our communities where we work to address some of the systemic gaps through efforts like our focus on financial education and literacy, we too are committed to long-term sustainable solutions. José spoke earlier about some of the folks that really make a lasting impression. And he talked about potentially a teacher. I had one of those teachers. My high school math teacher was the reason I pursued the actuarial profession and made that decision at the age of 16. And I did that really based solely on her advocacy and my trust for her based on how she had treated me along the way and always put my needs first. Fidelity's financial literacy efforts actually focuses on the same, and it includes the Learning Lab, which helps increase teachers' confidence in and knowledge of personal finance topics. And that program has prepared educators to take the skills that they obtained from that program in the classroom. So through that program Fidelity has reached more than 4,500 teachers and in turn almost half a million students nationwide since that program's inception in 2015. And I think together with some of the lessons that you heard from José about World Central Kitchen and about just the opportunity that we have in schools to actually have functional kitchens and really use that opportunity to teach children about food as well as good food habits, we all can make a difference. So thank you again. Thank you, José, for helping us to understand better about how you can find success and serve through passion. Fidelity Rewards is thrilled to bring you this event as part of the Inspiring Voices event series. We encourage you to stay tuned for upcoming events. And finally for the audience, please complete the survey with your feedback so we can continue to tailor these sessions to you, our members. And with that, I thank you for spending an hour with us in conversation with José. José, I wish you well. Thank you, thank you, thank you.

**JOSÉ:** Thank you and happy holidays to everybody. Merry Christmas. Whatever you celebrate. Let's make sure we build longer tables, not higher walls.

**WENDY:** And that we liberate those to whom we're trying to give.

**JOSÉ:** Boom. Thank you, Wendy.

**WENDY:** Thank you.



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