

Zingerman's®

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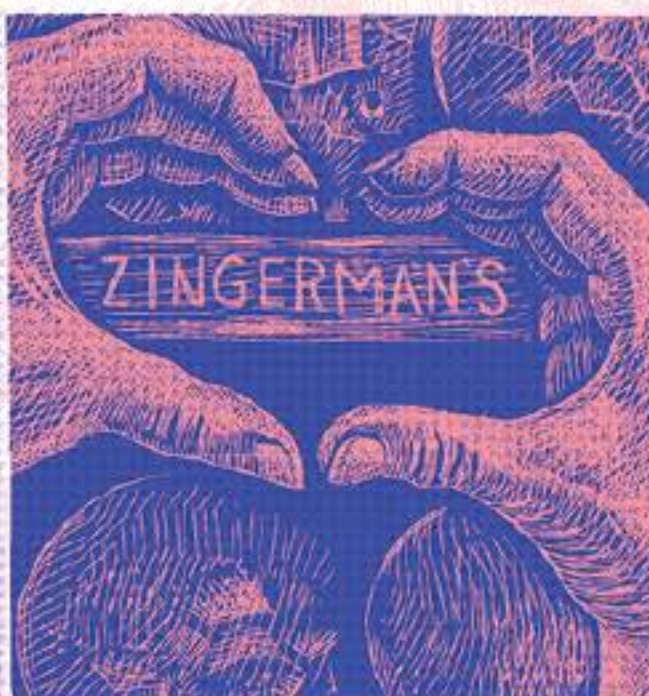
how to write a vision of success

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PROPELS THE

By Bretney Moore

Over the years, Zingerman's has had the honor of being the subject of interest for some truly talented writers at the University of Michigan. Last summer, Bretney Moore, a PhD candidate at the U of M, reached out with an interest in writing something for us and we were immediately enchanted. After meeting for tea and discussing the many topics she could explore, Bret was energized by our staff scholarship program and was quickly off and running on her piece! The article we received a few months later blew us away. We are so excited to share it with you!

Jenn

Jenn Hayman
Director of Marketing
Zingerman's Service Network



A WELCOME DISSERTATION DISTRACTION

I can't immediately find Jenny Tubbs when I arrive at Zingerman's Coffee Company on that dreary morning in late August. I suspect that she is the woman walking back and forth in front of the counter, clad in red Birkenstocks and red pants, but this is merely a hunch. I circle. I loiter. Do I look like a stalker? Ahh, yes, my ginger tea is ready. Great! An excuse to linger in the orbit of the red Birks. It is finally time to combat this awkwardness of mine. I approach. "Are you...?" I trail off. She nods. "You're Bret?" I nod. We have made contact. "I sent you an email," she says, "when I couldn't find you." Phone in hand, I quickly check my email. I am wearing red pants it reads. Definitely. Sartorially. I already like Jenny.

It is the summer after my third year and I am officially a PhD candidate in English at the University of Michigan. Feeling particularly untethered by my new status, ABD (All But Dissertation). And yet, the dissertation is a huge part of the PhD experience, if not the entirety of it. It strikes me that this acronym is akin to declaring "I completed a marathon, well, every thing but the running."

I scour my department for potential summer internships. Something, anything at all, to get my mind off the dissertation that I fail to see coming to fruition any time soon. The gods of procrastination, in their divine mercy, conspire to locate me at Zingerman's where I will spend the summer months interviewing a handful of staffers about their experience as recipients of the company's Great Foods Staff Scholarship. Recipients of the scholarship are awarded up to \$4500 to bring their personal culinary dreams to life.

"You create the vision, we will help you make it a reality."

Zingerman's, I am soon to learn, is quite serious about the work of visioning. As founding partner Ari Weinzwieg points out in *The Power of Personal Visioning*, "writing down a vision could be the highest honor we can pay to our consciousness." In fact, vision work is a central component of the application process, as each applicant must submit an Application Vision that outlines "what will happen because you earned this scholarship." Being a career student myself, I am intimately

familiar with committing my goals to writing, particularly in the form of research and personal statements. However, what distinguishes Zingerman's Application Vision from the aforementioned genres is the uniqueness of its applicants' positioning vis a vis time:

"Write it looking back from some time in the future—either a few years or a few decades." Or, as Jenny articulates this future-oriented stance:

In [the Application Vision], you are not talking about what you will do, but you are talking about what did happen. What is happening because of it. All the things that you can see happening that were this positive impact coming from you going and doing the work of this project. Very different from, "I've always wanted to go to Italy and..."

Of course, I don't know any of this as I embark on this series of interviews. While I have been privy to lots of talk about manifesting for the future, and am often grilled about my own five year plan, I have not been exposed to vision work. I have not been explicitly told that I should be visioning for the future that I desire. That is all about to change.

ACT NUMBER ONE

jenny's spice world

"it's a flavor worth talking about.
it's an experience."

JENNY TUBBS

To hear Jenny Tubbs tell it, she "kind of fell into food." She began her Zingerman's journey many moons ago doing "improvisational cooking" at Practical Produce where the bulk of the company's prep work was then done. To witness her narrate the daily thrill of arriving and taking stock of her ingredients is itself a joy: "It was kind of like Iron Chef every morning!" It was around this time, let's call it the Kitchen Stadium Era, that Jenny planted the seeds for her future position when she simply suggested to Ari that he might benefit from hiring an assistant. "I remember saying to [him]: 'I think you need an assistant. If you ever post for that position, I am going to apply.'" A mere seven months later, when Ari recognized the wisdom in her suggestion, Jenny was true to her word and applied. Almost two decades later, and with a diversity of projects under her belt, she continues on in this role.

Jenny absolutely lights up when I inquire about her Great Foods Staff Scholarship project. Partnering with the Montreal-based company, and longtime Zingerman's vendor, Épices de Cru, Jenny's vision is to foster unprecedented enthusiasm for all things spice. Welcome to

Jenny's Spice World (yes, I have indeed made a reference to the Spice Girls' 1997 musical comedy, *Spice World*). Épices de Cru is a family full of globe-trekking spice-heads, but you may know them as the hosts of Zingerman's annual Spice Week. For the uninitiated, and I include myself here, Spice Week events include a dinner at Roadhouse, a wealth of tastings at the Deli, and sometimes classes at BAKE! Spice Week is a foodie high holiday, eagerly awaited and perpetually disappointing at its conclusion. What if it were possible to harness that joy, that level of unbridled culinary celebration, during the remaining fifty-one weeks of the calendar year? This is precisely what Jenny aims to do.

Jenny's excitement is palpable, if not downright contagious. "You might taste a black pepper and be thinking about it for months to come." I sit up straighter and take a sip of my ginger tea. Not only do I believe her, but I have the distinct impression that I have been doing food, if not life, all wrong. "Let me show you some things," she says, opening her laptop. She produces her Application Vision and reads aloud to me, competing with the din of indus-

trial-grade coffee equipment. Picture it, *Firefly Hour*, 2018 (a reference to the *Golden Girls* (1985-1992)), and, yes, Sophia is my personal favorite. "Picture it, Sicily, 1943.":

Our third spice trade dinner at my house tonight was our biggest gathering yet! Folks from the August spice class I taught were excited to participate and were looking forward to it for weeks. Some even brought their kids—our youngest spice enthusiasts had fun toasting chiles over the fire, playing in the tree-house after dinner, and later spilling to the ball field in the park while their parents relaxed, swapped spices, shared recipes, and recorded ideas for the upcoming dinner this Fall.

I want to go to there (ok, you get the point, 30 Rock). Jenny's *Firefly Hour* is a whimsical scene that she has imagined, or that she has envisioned, of one of her Spice Trade dinner parties. These gatherings, as Jenny imagines them, bring together Zingerman's staff and their families to break bread and trade their favorite spices. She aims to "really get people talking and trading" while simultaneously building a community around a shared love of food and cooking. As you can see, Jenny's vision does

not use words like "will," "plan," or "propose." Instead, her self-assured language is a testament to the rhetorical force of Zingerman's visioning practices.

Much as I am loathe to leave the "warm glow of the flashing coals," I would be remiss if I did not share the other components of Jenny's vision. After immersing herself in the multi-sensorial world of spice in Montreal, where Jenny will attend Épices de Cru's spice course (This course is taught completely in French. I include this because I think it is worth noting that Jenny's vision includes a component of language immersion as well as culinary immersion. Vive les épices!), she will return to Zingerman's to embark on the pedagogical dimension of her work. Jenny plans to teach a class on spices for the benefit of her colleagues, at which point she will most assuredly drum up business for her Spice Trade dinners. Whether she is sharing Cesaria Evora's "Sobade" from one of her many thoughtfully curated Spotify playlists, or glorying in the marvels of the tellicherry pepper, Jenny Tubbs' passion is electric. If you get the chance to visit her Spice World, do take the journey!

"If you feel safe in the area you're working in, you're not working in the right area. Always go a little further into the water than you feel you're capable of being in. Go a little bit out of your depth. And when you don't feel that your feet are quite touching the bottom, you're just about in the right place to do something exciting."

DAVID BOWIE

ACT NUMBER TWO

nestor's pueblo on the patio

"we got a lot of people from
new mexico and they loved my food!"

NESTOR BONILLA

Nestor Bonilla is my second interview. After emailing back and forth for a week or so, we agree to meet on a Thursday after his shift at Zingerman's Deli, where he is a supervisor. Nestor texts me the night before to confirm our meeting, at which time he apologizes for communicating so late at night. It is totally fine, I assure him, I am nocturnal. Like Jenny's email identifying herself as the wearer of the red pants, I am immediately charmed by Nestor's text message. I am taken by his level of thoughtfulness. I suppose that I operate based almost entirely on vibes, and I immediately like Nestor's vibe, even in an epistolary sense. The next day, as I await the end of Nestor's shift while sipping an iced hibiscus tea, I wonder if he will live up to my impression of him in these other mediums. When he approaches a few minutes later, thanking me for agreeing to interview him as he extends his hand, I know that he absolutely will.

After Nestor and I find a quiet space in the uppermost level of Zingerman's Next Door Café, I learn that his boss has given him some time off from work to sit for this interview, and has even suggested this particular location.

Based on years of experience in food service jobs in both New York and Connecticut, this entire scenario is unimaginable to me. Not only am I thankful for this affordance, but I am beginning to understand that this level of care is systemic at Zingerman's. The realization hits me: I am seeing Ari's "One + One = A Lot!" ideology at work. "People feel a lot better about being part of an organization when they're actively engaged in a second piece of work, one that takes them outside of the bounds of their regular daily duties," Ari wrote in one of his leadership books. As I sit down across from Nestor, and queue up my phone to record mode, I wonder if this interview process will make him feel more "actively engaged" in his role at Zingerman's. Conducting these interviews has certainly made me feel more "actively engaged" in my role as an Ann Arborite.

Like an Oscar's speech, Nestor begins by thanking all those who helped him achieve his success, attributing his ability to secure the Great Foods Staff Scholarship to the help of colleagues and an incredibly supportive partner. He explains that two of his supervisors made him aware of the scholarship and hand-selected him to repre-

sent the Deli. "I did this one when I was young," Nestor's boss shares with him, encouraging him to apply. Once selected, Nestor decides that he will visit New Mexico, making Los Chileros de Nuevo México and Los Poblanos, two chile farms that are longtime Zingerman's vendors, the satellites during his twelve-day stay.

Still reeling from Jenny's *Firefly Hour* and the role of visioning, I ask Nestor about his vision. What were his hopes as he embarked on this project? He grabs his phone and quickly calls up a gorgeous infographic titled "Nestor's Vision." Welcome to Nestor's Spice (& Chile) World. Attentive to the alliterative, Nestor's vision centers on three p's: People, Produce, and Process. People: Nestor's whirlwind twelve-day tour of New Mexico includes visits to "historic haciendas, ranches, and native pueblos" so that he can "get to know New Mexico's food by getting to know its people, communities, and families." Produce: A chef at heart, Nestor spends a large part of his trip exploring the "unique native crops that bring flavor and flair to [New Mexico's] dishes," such as red chiles and blue maize. A man of with a specificity of vision, Nestor locates himself in the City of Hatch, home of the

chile, where he studies chile cultivation and use. Process: Hoping to gain a greater sense of the culinary traditions of the region, Nestor makes space for learning about the tools of the trade, such as adobe hornos and molcajetes. An accompanying map charts Nestor's progress as he eats his way across New Mexico, citing stops at Los Chileros de Nuevo México, the Santa Fe School of Cooking, and the Taos Adobe Ovens.

Nestor smiles as he talks about the crowning achievement of his project, his Pueblo on the Patio, a brunch to celebrate his take on the cuisine of New Mexico. "They want me to do one every week," he says, "it was so popular." In addition to an overwhelmingly popular brunch, where I hear the blue corn jalapeño muffins went like hotcakes, Nestor has been called on to host many an internal Zingerman's event. In future, you might find Nestor teaching a course at BAKE!, at which time he will share the secret to his now famous chile cascabel sauce (one hopes!). As we are packing up, I make Nestor swear that he will personally email me the next time he hosts an event. He laughs, assuring me that he will. Nestor, if you are reading this, set aside a blue corn jalapeño muffin for me.

ACT NUMBER THREE

caitlin's irish adventures

"when i reached out to ballymaloe to plan my visit and offer my help, they offered me a three-month long internship at their cookery school. at first, as a manager at the roadhouse, i said, 'well how can i do that?'"

CAITLIN DOYLE

Caitlin Doyle has food in her DNA. The third in a line of culinary goddesses, she fondly recalls the scratch pie shells, comforting bisques, and effortless quiches of her childhood. "They were both true foodies," Caitlin says of her mother and grandmother, "and they obviously passed this passion along to me." Eyes firmly fixed on the prize, Caitlin began working in food service and enrolling in culinary classes while still in high school. She eventually finds herself at Zingerman's Roadhouse where she is in charge of, among other things, planning the annual Irish Farm Dinner. In this role, as the host and curator of a uniquely Irish experience, Caitlin learns about Ballymaloe Cookery School located in County Cork, Ireland. Unique for its focus on farm-to-table pedagogy, Ballymaloe encourages students to call 100 acres of organic farmland and gardens their pantry.

When Caitlin is offered a three month internship at Ballymaloe she is unsure how her protracted absence will be felt at the Roadhouse, where she is a manager. However, a conversation with

her supervisor makes her feel fully supported, convincing her to seize the opportunity. "He said 'Well Caitlin, Do you want to do it?'" and I replied, "Well of course, but, come on, I can't!" He then said, "Well why not? Do you really think we should pass this up?" And, with the backing of the Great Foods Staff Scholarship, Caitlin heads off to "Court County Cork." A Zingerman's staffer through and through, Caitlin's experience is fortified by visioning work, and grounded by big picture thinking. Her Application Vision establishes a connection between Ballymaloe Cookery School and Zingerman's own Cornman Farms, and serves as a blueprint for her aspirations to take the lead in event planning at the farm upon her return. Similar to Jenny's Firefly Hour, Caitlin brings a multi-sensorial scene to life when she imagines a wedding at Cornman Farms. Picture it, Cornman Farms, May 2014:

Everywhere you turn there are smiling faces, beautiful fresh blossoms in the orchards, the sweet smells of the edible garden are wafting towards the big barn, and sounds of the farm posi-

tively take part in the actions of the day. We are all incredibly excited for the new couple and thrilled to start holding events at the Farm.

Not only does Caitlin's proposed vision land her the Great Foods Staff Scholarship, which leads to her Irish adventures, but it helps her to articulate the position of her dreams. Spoiler alert: as the Catering and Events Manager for Zingerman's Roadhouse, Caitlin is now responsible for hosting weddings and events at Cornman Farms—precisely the position she imagines for herself in 2013.

I knew nothing about visioning before my Zingerman's immersion, but by the time of Caitlin's interview I am fully and totally obsessed. What began as a gentle suggestion that I do some light visioning exercises in order to imagine my ideal professional life has morphed into a full-fledged journey into myself. Where should I begin? Is there an equation to help me secure the small-liberal-arts college-professor job of my dreams? Perhaps it was too much pressure to put on Caitlin, but I sought her counsel in these affairs. I will leave you with her sage advice.

Real talk: Visions can be really easy for me to write or very difficult. BUT once I start writing it, it usually starts flowing. If I am having a difficult time with visioning, I try not to get specific and think about how I want to feel, what I want to see, what I want to taste or hear in that moment in the future.

And, in visioning through a fear of failure, Caitlin has the following to offer (I see you, Imposter Syndrome):

I have had staff that I have encouraged to write a vision and they have a fear of not completing it or meeting the vision. My wisdom for them is that a vision is just a tool and not an end point. If you drift and not finish it that is ok. Write a new one! We are all ever growing, ever changing beautiful humans and the future is not determined. A vision is a great tool to help us to begin working, even if the ending changes a bit.

* Caitlin's latest vision has taken her outside of Zingerman's—we are cheering her on!

ELECTRIC LADY GENTLEMAN LAND

...
there is an electricity to these people.
i practically buzzed with it after i met Jenny,
and Caitlin and Nestor were no exception.
...

"Let's queue up one of Jenny's Spotify mixes!" "Did I show you Nestor's New Mexico inspired menu? He even had vegetarian options!" "Hey, check out Caitlin's pictures from Ireland!"

It never failed: each and every time I encountered a Zingerman's staffer, I left somewhat changed. I left awake. I left regenerated. I mean it; these folks conduct electricity. They are a conduit for the stuff. I joked with my partner: "If this is some kind of cult, you can count me in!" Spoiler alert: Zingerman's is not secretly a cult, although I do suspect that Ari would have little trouble generating a following if it came down to it. If you are a Zingerman's devotee you are nodding vigorously by now. You get it. You feel me. You too have wondered about the special brand of magic dust in no short supply in Zing-Land. You too have felt the current. But, how? What is it about these people? What is it about the culture of this company?

So, hear me out. I have a theory. I believe that personal and professional visioning propels the Magic. If this sounds esoteric, or worse, if this sounds like new-age mumbo-jumbo, allow me to consult my crystals and get back to you. Or, perhaps a definition would be more helpful at this point.

"A vision is a richly detailed, emotionally engaging picture of what success means... at a particular point of time in the future". Put even more succinctly: A vision is "the elevation of our true dreams and desires to documented status." In concrete terms, a vision is a handwritten document that expresses its author's aspirations for the future. The creation of this document should take no longer than thirty minutes and should not be a self-censoring practice. That said, it is not a chance to become your own line editor. The author, turned visionary, should not concern herself with the expectations of others, but should instead focus on the proper recipe for her own holistic well being.

Some of the best advice that I received regarding visioning work came from Jenn Hayman, Director of Marketing for Zingerman's Service Network. As I sat across from her bemoaning my lot as a humanities PhD with zero job market prospects in my not-so-distant future, Jenn encouraged me to vision, but to do so very specifically.

Where do you want to teach? How do you want your life to look? How do you picture it?

To loosely paraphrase Jenn: "If you want to live close to your mom, put that in your

vision, something like: 'I got out of class tonight and headed to my mom's house for tea. It's wonderful that campus is only fifteen minutes away from her house!'" Proponents of visioning work, Zingerman's founding partner Ari Weinzwieg chief among them, herald the method as a mindful, and deeply meaningful, engagement with our future (personal and professional) selves. While visioning isn't a binding contract with your future self, or the universe for that matter, it certainly does offer you time to reflect on your goals and the chance to live according to said goals. And who among us wouldn't stand to benefit from a life lived according to a set of preordained goals?

I hope that I have not digressed.

I hope that I have not meandered too far off the path.

I hope that I have not taken us too far afield.

My point is that these people, these Zingerman's folks, really believe in visioning work. They live it. They have seen, firsthand, the power of future oriented goal setting. Take Jenny Tubbs, for example, who spoke her current position into being by simply suggesting to Ari that he hire an assistant.

Or Nestor Bonilla, whose Pueblo on the Patio left staff and customers alike clamoring for more of this successful young chef's cuisine. And Caitlin Doyle, who could see herself at Cornman Farms years before she began taking future brides on tours of the grounds. Applying for the Great Foods Staff Scholarship offers its recipients something beyond the dollars and cents necessary to realize a personal culinary goal, it offers them an opportunity to honor, publicly and in writing, their future tense selves. The scholarship is a case study in visioning work; it is a lens through which the recipient may witness herself propelled into a future where her goals are not merely attainable, but are a reality. Actively and agentially investing in lives that we truly desire, as opposed to lives that merely happen to us, is an invaluable gift that we have the power to bestow upon ourselves. This is the work of visioning. This is the lesson I have learned through my brief, although deeply shaping, interactions with the lovely human beings of Zingerman's. If I can unlearn the skepticism of over thirty years of East Coast conditioning as I set to work penning my own vision for the future, well then, perhaps there is hope for you too.

Justine

AN INTERVIEW
... WITH ...

Ji Hye KIM

Head Chef &
Managing Partner
of Miss Kim

Few Americans know much about Korean cooking other than maybe "Korean bbq" or they've heard of or tasted kimchi somewhere. What Head Chef and Managing Partner, Ji Hye Kim, is cooking at Miss Kim takes us to a whole new level.

Ari: What are some of the highlights on the summer menu?

Ji Hye: Summertime is super exciting for me because the menu starts changing more frequently based on what's available at the farmer's market. The summer menu tends to lean heavily on vegetables and focuses on lighter flavors.

I'm excited about kimchi salad. Unlike wintry kimchi like napa cabbage kimchi, spring and summer kimchi can be lighter and fresher, incorporating fresh greens in season. It doesn't ferment very long, but has all crunch from fresh vegetables in season and the pungent garlic, chili and fish sauce flavors. We change up the greens based on season, starting with tender baby bokchoy in spring, then tatsoi, tokyo bekana, baby kale and arugula, hearts of the heirloom speckled romaine, french breakfast radish, cucumbers, and on and on.

I'm also eagerly anticipating the tomato season. We have this tomato salad with soft tofu, dressed in vinegar soy sauce and perilla or shiso. It's a delicious, healthy and summery thing that I can eat that every meal and be super happy.

Looking ahead to the fall, can you share just a couple things you're thinking about putting on the menu?

Delicata squash donuts! Well, not really donuts, but just as addictive. We take local delicata squash in season, cut into rings, then fry them in light tempura batter. They are then drizzled with fish sauce caramel and toasted seaweed and sesame mix. I know, it sounds intriguing, strange even. But the fish sauce caramel is like savory salted caramel, and along with the toasted seaweed, it really brings out and balances the natural sweetness of the local delicata squash.

I'm also thinking about ways to make more stews and soups for the fall and winter. The leek and mushroom soup we had last fall was so satisfying that we will probably bring that back. Other stews I'm developing are kimchi and collard green stew and silken tofu stew with a soft egg. When it gets cold, that's when I want some comforting soups and stews.

A lot of people are really appreciating your great work with spicing and seasoning. Can you talk a bit about how you develop it for each dish?

Korean food now has a reputation for spiciness, with its abundant use of chili flakes. This is especially true of food you find at restaurants and the regional cooking of Southern Korea. I grew up with a mother who cooked everything from scratch, and she is from the central part of Korea where the balance of seasoning and spices is important. I think about balance a lot, looking for ways to use spice to complement the natural flavors of the ingredients.

My research into ancient Korean cookbooks really came in handy for that. For example, we use sansho peppercorns from Epices de Cru at the restaurant, though you don't see that very often in Korea any more other than in some Buddhist and country cooking. Spicy chili peppers are the king now. But it wasn't always so. Some say that chili peppers did not come into Korea until 17th Century or so. I don't know if that's proven, but I do know that most ancient cookbooks do not have chili peppers as a major ingredient until the late 18th century or even the 19th century. What was more prevalent was sansho pepper (sanchu in Korean), used in flower form and peppercorn form.

So I research how it was used historically, and I often incorporate that to strike a balance for a dish. Sansho has a pleasant citrus note, so sometimes I use it when the dish I'm developing is on the heavy side and I want a bit of tangy note to brighten it up. Sometimes I use it instead of black peppercorn when the dish needs a lighter touch than black pepper. It's very fun.



If someone was coming to Miss Kim for the first time, and really hadn't had much exposure to Korean food, what might you suggest they order?

Tteokbokki. We have two kinds, the Street Style and the Royale Style. The Street Style is our interpretation of the kind of tteokbokki you see all over Korea as the most quintessential street food—spicy with gochujang sauce, bits of pork belly and soft egg. The Royale Style is our interpretation of the original tteokbokki dish from the Joseon Palace—savory with soy sauce, mushrooms and vegetables. It's a dish that we've always had since the pop-up days way before the restaurant opened, and one of our best sellers. We understand the evolution of the dish that's tied to Korean history, it was one of my favorite things as a child, and we get the best freshly made rice cakes from a local Korean lady. I think it really tells the story of our restaurant, a great example of our historical research, my personal connection to the dish, and our use of locally-made ingredients.

What about someone who's been to Korea and long ago fell in love with the flavors of Korean cooking?

I'd get the kimchi fried rice or the leek and mushroom soup.

We make kimchi ourselves. Kimchi fried rice is really great, because we use the stone bowl to crisp up the soy butter rice and the homemade ripe moo radish kimchi adds some spicy kick and texture. It's topped with soft egg that's going to scramble when you mix it all in on the hot stone bowl, and toasted seaweed. It's a simple and delicious dish.

The leek and mushroom soup is a bit different. The original dish is made with heavy beef stock and pulled beef. We make ours vegan with mushrooms and royal fern. It's just as complex, savory and satisfying. We weren't looking to make a vegan version, but when we were testing the recipe, we decided that the dish was already delicious and did not need the beef.

By Ari Weinweig

It has all the Korean flavors, but with a lighter touch. It will remind you of the wonderful soups of Korea with a fresh take.

If any one wants to read more about Korean cuisine and culture, are there any resources you would suggest?

There are so many amazing books, but there are two books I want to recommend, both of them initially published in Korean then translated into English.

Beauty of Korean food: with 100 Best Loved Recipes

The author is an expert on Korean food in general, and of the regional food of Gyeonggi and historical food. This is a great book, a sort of building block starter book for Korean food. Her recipes are tightly documented, and very accurate. You will need a scale, because the recipes are in grams rather than by volume. The English translation is a little clunky, but as long as you follow the measurements and the steps, you will be able to cook Korean food like a pro.

Wookwan's Korean Temple Food: the Road to the Taste of Enlightenment

It is written by a Buddhist nun chef, who forages, farms and cooks every day for her temple. The recipes are traditional but creative. She offers background on Korean buddhist food tradition as well. I recommend it highly to anyone who loves food, not just vegetarians.

Are there any other places in the US that do traditional regional Korean food in this way? Are there any in Korea that serves the food of different regions in one restaurant?

I'm not sure of one that focuses on regional cooking specifically or historical cuisine. But there are many chefs right now focusing on elevating Korean food with great ingredients and creativity, and I'm sure they're getting inspiration from everywhere.

Ari Ari Weinweig
Zingerman's Co-founder

A CREATIVE
MENU
ROOTED
IN
KOREAN TRADITION

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MISS KIM

Kristie

MANAGING PARTNER ZINGERMAN'S FOOD TOURS

One of the most common questions I get asked as I make my way around is, "Any new businesses?" Given that we move relatively slowly by the world's standards, my usual answer is a smile and a "No, nothing lately—between all our renovations, dealing with the inevitable ups and downs of daily life in the food world, and working on another book (and another pamphlet to boot) I've got plenty to keep me busy. But this year, I actually have a more meaningful answer, one that completes the question more effectively.

Ar: Any new businesses in the ZCoB lately?

Kristie: Yes! It's pretty exciting! We've made the food tour work we've been doing off and on over the last twenty years and we've turned it into a formal business. Kristie Brablec, who's been with us here at Zingerman's for about 15 years, is the managing partner. Which means that we've got I think as many women partners as men. Which I think is great! A step in the right socio-economic direction! And, I long loved working with Kristie.

To give you the low down on this high-flying new small Zingerman's business (it doesn't even have any employees yet! Just a managing partner and a few folks helping out around the edges!), here's a bit of an insider interview with Ms. Brablec. Check out the details of her work at zingermansfoodtours.com.

How did you get here? Can you give us a bit of the Kristie Brablec story?

Kristie: If I'm being honest, I don't think it was that clear to me that my childhood would have an impact on my career until much later. When I was young I grew up with a father who was a pilot, so I spend a lot of time with my grandmother and other families. I spent a lot of time in the kitchen with my grandmother watching her cook three meals a day for our family in the field and there was nothing romantic about it. She would wake up a dawn cook breakfast for the crew, clean up, and start straight into lunch straight through dinner, every single day! My grandmother taught me how to be strong, independent and caring all in a very indirect and quiet way...through food. Okay, maybe I didn't take on the quiet part of that lesson but she led with grace and strength and never asked for anything in return except for maybe a dishwasher eventually. She taught me to show love and care through action.

We didn't eat anything fancy. It was truly a melting pot of the old and new. She made her own sausage, baked beautiful Czech pastries

all while taking full advantage of the new world of processed food. We used miracle whip as salad dressing, had a full stock of buttermilk in the fridge and had a consistent supply of graham crackers with icing at the table. This was clearly impactful on me but it wasn't until 20-plus years later that I could recognize it. I now see how her actions and that environment have given me real, tangible values around food the table and feeding the ones you love.

I grew up traveling but also on a farm, so my world was large and small all at the same time. I played in fields and in airports. I was surrounded by grownups and my hair was always tangled. Wherever my dad went I followed and it was something I wouldn't trade for the world.

In high school and college, I studied fine art with a focus on ceramics. Naturally, I ended up in food ;)

What's kept you in the ZCoB for all these years?

I had gone through the early part of my life often feeling like I didn't really belong anywhere. I struggled to fit in which was likely a product of me always being on the go and having a fairly unconventional upbringing. Something I wouldn't change for the world now but as a teenager, it was hard to understand those feelings. When I started at Zingerman's I needed a job – I didn't think it would take me down this path that would forever change my life.

Within the first week of my employment, I knew Zingerman's was right for me. I was not asked to change anything, in fact, one of the lines I remember the most during my interview was: "We do not ask you to check your personality at the door." This was mind-blowing to me. I had wild hair and piercings and people were always telling me to conform. It was very liberating—my opinion mattered and my curiosity was fed.

What got you so excited about being the managing partner at Zingerman's food tours?

I have known Zingerman's was my home for many years. I knew this was the right community for me to thrive in and hopefully to help others thrive as well. After taking my first trip with one of the Mail Order managing partners, Toni Morell, to Tuscany years ago I knew right then and there, this was my path. I knew it was a perfect fit for my personality and my strengths. I love to travel, it allowed me to get to the source of the food, it took me to farms,

allowed me to meet incredible food producers who I believe are beautiful artists, allowed me to study my love of wine and most importantly allowed me to connect with our guests in a very personal and meaningful way. I want to be a part of Zingerman's future and connect people to their food in profound ways.

Most everyone who hears about them thinks going on a Zingerman's food tour sounds pretty amazing. Can you walk us through what one is like?

Sure! They are intense but loaded with amazing experiences.

Generally, we pick a region that we feel makes a connection between food and culture.

We try to touch on the regional cuisine, the farmers, the producers and the wine. If you take Hungary for example, we team up with an amazing co-host Gábor Bánfalvi [who was just here speaking at Camp Bacon]. Over the course or many years working together, we have really created something amazing. We venture into the Jewish traditions of Hungary, the impact of the Austro-Hungarian empire and of course the lesson and impact of the Soviet regime. We travel through much of the countryside, learning about their local culture, eating local variations in traditional dishes and spend some quality time teaching you about the local wines. From red to white, from sweet to dry. You leave these tours with a new way of thinking about your food where it comes from and what you may choose to buy in the future. Not to mention a new friend or two.

How many tours are you doing?

Currently, I am personally doing 8 or 9 a year. We have a few other Zingerman's folks that lead tours as well and hopefully more Zingerman's guides in the future.

How do you make connections with the local folks you visit on the tours?

The good old fashioned way! By asking around, reading up on the local food scene, trusting in our partners and like-minded food spirits, and by going to see for ourselves. Sometimes our connections are current producers that Zingerman's works with, sometimes those procedures lead to other producers and the world just keeps growing. Once people understand what we are trying to do it's often a matter of narrowing the choices down rather than finding more – the food world is remarkable and people are doing interesting things all over. It's our job to seek it out the traditional and the unique – this takes time, curiosity and a lot of reading.

What's been the reaction of people who come on them? Are you still in touch with people from the tours?

Yes! When you spend 10 days with someone you get to know them well! Food is the glue that binds us all and many friendships have flourished from these tours. This not only happens with me and other guides but often with the guests themselves. I know of many who started as strangers and now visit each other on their own time, spend time with each other's families, and who travel long distances to see each other again.



A NOTE FROM RECENT FOOD TOURS TRAVELERS



...
We travel for food. Why? Certainly, the love of a good meal is part of it, but discovering the way a society farms, cooks and eats helps us better understand the people and the culture. Why do people eat what they eat? What historical events or the special geographical attributes of the land impacted the way food was gathered and produces? What do people eat for sustenance, for treats, for celebration? Learning the answers to these questions is a big part of why we travel.

That's why after our first Zingerman's Food Tours we knew we found a kindred spirit in Kristie Brablec. Our first trip through Croatia was fantastic. Through meeting the producers and farmers and seeing their passion in continuing traditions and creating new ones, we felt a connection far beyond a simple "touristic" trip. We learned about the history of the land and people, and the cultural influences that created the food environment they have today. The personal relationships which Zingerman's has created over the years are truly special and something a casual traveler could never experience. After that first trip, we were hooked! We've just finished our 5th trip—through Sicily—with Zingerman's Food Tours and have two more booked.

We look forward to continuing our exploration of food and culture with Zingerman's and Kristie!

LESLIE WALLACE & DEREK CLEGG



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It's amazing really! If you come on one of our tours with an open heart and an open mind the world can be yours.

You also teach some for ZingTrain? What's that been like?

I love teaching! I believe in what Zingerman's has to offer and I always feel energized from working with others. ZingTrain is a special space that allows all of us to help and grow from each other. It's remarkable, really. I have been teaching a little less as I grow this new food tour business, but I look forward to getting back in the classroom in the future.

Business is hard and it's nice to know we all struggle and thrive in different ways despite being in food, or healthcare or a small independent bookstore owner. We all face unique and similar challenges and it's helpful to be in a space where you can share and learn from each other.

How does it feel when you come home from one of the tours?

Honestly, I'm still learning and it can be a bit hard. When you have been going for a month straight, it's hard to shift from a life on the road to life back home.

I read a quote recently that struck me,

"When you go away for a long time, you return a different person. You never really come all the way back."

This isn't a bad thing but when you travel like this and experience cultures and people in a real and meaningful way it's impossible not to be transformed in some way. It's hard to truly convey the magic and hard work that comes with a job like this. It's romantic and educational for sure but always with a layer of complexity that others will never see. Not to mention a brain fog that is hard to wade through on some days. Staying connected while being gone is a challenge but with a little practice, I think we'll all get better at it.

You're also a pilot—ever thought about a Zingerman's Food Tour where you fly the group yourself ;)?

I would LOVE to make this a reality someday.

What are some of the great things coming up in the next year?

Verona, Verona Verona! I'm so excited to share this beautiful region of Italy with our guests. Also, Lyon and Jura, France, Israel and our new 4 Days of Flavor in London! We have some great stuff lined up.

Ari

Ari Weinzweig
Zingerman's Co-founder



ZingTRAIN

ZingTrain's 25th

that's 25 wonderful years
relationships with businesses b

To celebrate ZingTrain's silver anniversary, Emily Sandelands, ZingTrain community builder, sat down with ZingTrain's Founder and Co-Managing Partner, Maggie Bayless, and asked her to spill the beans on ZingTrain's beginnings, the milestone moments, how things have changed over the years, and her vision for ZingTrain's future. As you'll see, it's a future that Co-Managing Partner Katie Frank is eager to help champion, which you'll learn about later in the interview!

Emily Sandelands: For those not familiar with how ZingTrain got started, can you share your inspiration for starting the business?

Maggie Bayless: I'd known Ari and Paul since before the Deli got started, when we worked together at a different restaurant in town. I was one of those unpaid friends and family that helped with the Deli's opening back in March of 1982. I worked on Saturdays while I was in the MBA program at the University of Michigan, driving to Oak Park on Saturday mornings to pick up the Deli's bread order, and then coming back to work on the retail counter for the rest of the day. When I graduated with my MBA, I explored the big corporate world (General Motors), the entrepreneurial world (Soho Soda) and the training world (Arbor Systems Group).

I found that I had a real interest in, and passion for, training design and delivery. But I was disappointed that none of the organizations I worked for had the service-oriented culture that I'd experienced at Zingerman's,

so I was interested in finding a way to work with Ari and Paul again.

In 1994, when I read their first long-term "formal" vision for the organization (Zingerman's 2009: A Food Odyssey—you can see it in the back of Ari's book, *Building a Great Business*),

I realized that strong training systems would be key to creating the Community of Businesses that Ari and Paul were looking for. I stayed up all night writing a vision for what would become ZingTrain, which the three of us started in June of 1994, with a \$1,000 investment, a desk in my attic, a second phone line and a fax modem for the computer I already owned.

Now, 25 years later, ZingTrain has its own training facility and a staff of a dozen people. We'll do about \$2 million in sales this year working with organizations who travel to Ann Arbor for our public seminars and those that hire us to lead private workshops for their teams all over the country and even overseas!

There are likely dozens (if not hundreds!) of these, but can you describe a few "milestone" moments in ZingTrain's history?

Well, our first seminar was certainly a milestone! Our first seminar happened on March 31-April 1, 1996 and was held in the overflow dining room upstairs in the Deli's Next Door Cafe. That session sold out, despite the fact that we didn't do advertising—just some press releases that got us an article or two in some of the specialty food trade publications.

Of course, back then we considered 16 participants "sold out"! Now we regularly host (and have room for!) 30-person seminars.

Another milestone was taking on a second managing partner, which happened when Stas' Kazmierski joined me in 2000. While Ari and Paul were (and still are) partners in the business and often teach and speak to ZingTrain clients, their role is not to run the day-to-day operations at ZingTrain. By the late 1990s, the demand for ZingTrain's services was increasing and I had two small children at home, which limited the amount of time I wanted to be on the road. Stas' was well known to Zingerman's as the consultant who had facilitated the work to create both our Mission Statement and the 2009 vision. He was also a Deli regular since his office was down the street and he came in for coffee multiple times every day. Working together, Stas' and I were able to take ZingTrain to the

next level and by the time he retired in 2013, we had moved into our current space on Plaza Drive (Stas' first ZingTrain desk was in a basement across the street from the Deli) and had become an organization with multiple trainers as well as a support team of marketing, administrative and logistics experts.

More recently, Katie Frank became a ZingTrain co-managing partner after being a ZingTrain trainer for 7 years. Katie will be leading ZingTrain into the future when I step back into a part-time role in August of 2020—which I guess is a future milestone!

What has been the most satisfying part of leading ZingTrain for 25 years?

The people I've had the privilege to work with—both colleagues within the Zingerman's Community of Businesses and clients from around the country, and around the world. There are so many interesting



Anniversary!

By Emily Sandelands

s of developing long-term
ing and small, from near and far.

ration from an attic in 1994 (more details on that below) has
Today, ZingTrain employs more than a dozen staff members,
and works with and learns from clients from all over the world.
ng clients-turned-friends that we get to do the work we love.
blossom, as we form new relationships, in the years to come!

people, doing very interesting and worth-while things, that I would not have had the opportunity to meet without ZingTrain to bring us together.

And while I love great food, it has always been the people that make or break a job for me. At ZingTrain I've been lucky to work with an incredible group of smart, funny, irreverent, committed people who have helped bring my vision for this company into existence. When I am able to share my own insights and experiences in a way that helps someone else—be they a staff member, a fellow managing partner or a ZingTrain client—that is truly gratifying.

How has ZingTrain changed over the years?

Most obviously, we've gotten bigger. Both in terms of revenue and in the number of staff. And our offices and training spaces have changed dramatically!

We're no longer shoe-horned into other people's space; we have space of our own that was designed expressly for the work that we do.

In the beginning, much of my time was spent with the other Zingerman's businesses, helping establish the training systems that are a foundation of the Zingerman's Community of Businesses (ZCoB) culture. And of course ZingTrain still does work with them, but it is a smaller percentage of our time and our revenue than it once was.

In most ways, though, we have NOT changed. We are still trainers, sharing the tips, techniques, systems and organizational recipes that have helped Zingerman's be successful for 37+ years.

Katie Frank became your co-managing partner last year, which marked the beginning of your gradual transition out of the day-to-day running of ZingTrain. What are you most excited about for Katie? And for YOUR next chapter?

I am excited that Katie is now a business owner, as that has been one of her ambitions since she was a little girl!

We teach about our Path to Partnership in the Zingerman's Experience Seminar and it was great to see Katie go down that path successfully. And I am excited for ZingTrain that I will be able to step out of the day-to-day, while leaving the business in Katie's able hands. I'm excited to explore some of the projects that have been on my mind for the past many years, and that I think can really benefit both ZingTrain and the ZCoB, but that I just haven't had the bandwidth to work on. Back in 1994, most of my work was with the other Zingerman's businesses, and I'm looking forward to re-focusing my attention on our internal training systems after many years of focusing on outside clients.

There are likely TONS of people to thank for allowing us to get to this point, but is there anyone in particular that you'd like to mention here?

I will always be grateful to Ari and Paul, who believed in my vision for ZingTrain and had faith in my ability to build a business when I wasn't sure about that myself. They are two of the most generous people I've ever met; always

willing to share ideas, experience, time and credit for success. ZingTrain would not, and could not, have happened without them.

What does your vision for ZingTrain's next 25 years look like?

The vision of what ZingTrain looks like 25 years from now should, and will, be written by the people who will make that vision a reality. For my part, my vision is for ZingTrain's continued success—as an active part of the Ann Arbor community, as a resource for business owners around the world, and as an organization where people are excited to come to work.

As for Katie Frank's vision for ZingTrain's next 25 years...

I am excited to continue the work of ZingTrain into the future! I relish the challenge of organizing our team around providing memorable and distinctive experiences in every way people come into contact with ZingTrain. It is invigorating working with so many amazing clients, doing very innovative things. All of our work honors Maggie and Stas' legacy into the future and I am filled with gratitude for that opportunity.

Thank you to everyone who has helped us get to where we are today. We can't wait to see what's to come in the next 25 years!

Emily Sandelands,
Community Builder,
ZingTrain

VINEGAR

THE
UNSUNG

Hero

By Grace Singleton

The unsung hero of the culinary world is most certainly vinegar. Often undervalued and dismissed as unimportant, vinegar can be an afterthought when you're cooking. In reality, it's a secret weapon in your kitchen arsenal that helps unlock the subtle hidden flavors.

I am infatuated with vinegar. I always have 5-7 different kinds of vinegar in my pantry to accent the food and drinks I enjoy at home. I find it sad that vinegar isn't more respected when people are filling their cupboards.

Vinegar is, in my opinion, one of the best ways to add more diverse and complex flavors to almost any dish. Ari, our taste-maker here at Zingerman's, wrote a great piece about the importance and impact of salt levels in cooking, and I'd like to nominate vinegar as the second most important secret ingredient.

Adding a splash of acidity with vinegar is another trick you can call upon to make flavors stand out and leave all your friends wondering about why your cooking is so darn tasty. For example, adding a little Banyuls wine vinegar to my chili and adding a splash of the Lobato sherry vinegar to my bean soup takes things to the next level.

The wine connection

Vinegar is the lesser known, more flavorful, yet often ostracized cousin of many amazing vintners (winemakers). The same deep and nuanced knowledge we have about wine flavors also apply to vinegar. The types of grape varietals, the ripeness of the harvest, the elevation of the vines, the name and style of the acidifier, the blending and the process of fermentation, all impact the nuanced flavor characteristics available in both wine and vinegar.

The better the original grape and the wine, the better the vinegar. In Europe, many of the best wine producers also make vinegar. A good friend of mine and a wonderful distributor of French and Spanish food, Kitty Keller, often goes to wine shows abroad and asks the vintners about their vinegar. Most have a bottle in the back, under their table – not out for general display. This is a great way to find exceptional vinegar! This isn't the case in the U.S., however – most U.S. winemakers don't want vinegar anywhere near their wine production.

Range of flavor

Vinegar can be sweet or savory and can range from mild to bold acidity. Using a small amount of a bold vinegar adds a ton of flavor. There's a group of vinegar makers in Italy, one of which is San Giacomo, that refuse to water down its vinegar.

O MED YUZU VINEGAR

This beauty comes in a bright, sunflower yellow bottle. You'll want to leave it out on the counter and show it off! Fun, beautiful bottles always make me smile when I cook. A fun partner for the Yuzu vinegar is the Alziari olive oil from France. The buttery and silky French olive oil pairs well with the citrusy notes of Yuzu and comes in a stunning blue bottle that you can usually find on display in my kitchen. Just by leaving the yuzu vinegar and Alziari olive oil on your counter, you'll have your friends oohing and ahing over your pantry.

Some of the sweeter types of vinegars include:

Balsamic – A true, barrel-aged balsamic vinegar has a beautiful, rich sweetness to it

Pedro Ximenez – A dark, sweet fortified wine from Spain

Agrodolce – A lighter-bodied, fruity vinegar that can also be from the balsamic region, made from white grapes

Grape varieties and flavor profiles

Similar to selecting a wine made from a specific grape, individual grape varietals are also present in vinegar. Here's a brief introduction to a few of my favorite vinegars, all of which are available in the Deli's retail space.

Katz Zinfandel & Sauvignon Blanc Vinegar – The Katz Zinfandel made in California is one of my favorites. It has the big, jammy, grapey sweetness of a Zinfandel wine with a balanced amount of acidity and tartness. The Katz Sauvignon Blanc vinegar features the bright, grassy flavors you'd expect in a great wine.

Rozendal Hibiscus Vinegar – If you want to experience a slightly sweeter, full-flavored vinegar you should try the botanical vinegars made in South Africa by Rozendal – hibiscus is a best seller!

Gardeny Vermouth Vinegar – This vermouth vinegar, made under the Gardeny label using the Schützenbach method of production is one of the many unique Spanish vinegars we carry.

O Med Yuzu Vinegar – A wonderful, citrusy vinegar! Yuzu has lower acidity and more stimulating aromatics than our western citrus. Incredibly versatile, yuzu olive oil brings out the natural flavors beautifully.

How to use vinegar in cooking

Whether you're making a marinade for meat or fish entrees, a classic vinaigrette for a salad, a fresh vegetable slaw, splashing a little on the side of sautéed vegetables, or just want to drink something refreshing after a long day at work, vinegar can add to and enhance the flavors of most any dish – including dessert. Here are a few of my favorite vinegar applications:

Mocktails

I love making mocktails with vinegar. In addition to the varied health benefits attributed to drinking traditionally-made vinegar, vinegar mocktails are also a good way to drink something fun in a non-alcoholic form. I often like to take a break from drinking alcohol, but I get really bored with drinking just water, and I don't like to drink too many sweet sodas. To keep my non-alcoholic drinks fun, I always keep a bunch of soda water around and experiment with flavors using special vinegars and fresh herbs.

Sweet Honey Mocktail

If you like to experiment, try some fresh berries muddled with a little fresh mint and some of the Mieli Thun honey vinegar, and top it off with some soda water.

Cool Cucumber Mocktail

If you prefer something a little less sweet, a fresh peeled and seeded cucumber can be muddled with a little fresh thyme or rosemary and combined with the Navarino rosemary & thyme vinegar from Greece. Once you have your mix, top it with soda water and you've got a cool, refreshing beverage!

Marinades

Many roast marinades aren't complete without a little vinegar. Play around with different combinations of red wine vinegar, olive oil and fresh, ground spices to add some different flavors.

Vinaigrettes

I like to make a light vinaigrette to serve with fish dishes. Sautéed lake perch with a light cava vinaigrette adds a nice accent without overwhelming the delicate flavors of the perch. Putting a splash of the Balsamella vinegar (a thick cooked must vinegar made from apples by San Giacomo in Italy) on roasted, or boiled rutabaga. The sweetness of the apple flavor makes a nice contrast to the slightly bitter earthy flavors of the rutabaga.

Dessert

Fresh strawberry season is almost here. A great way to finish your day with something sweet is to drizzle a little balsamic vinegar over some strawberries. It's a refreshing, slightly sweet treat that you can eat as it is or served over some vanilla gelato from Zingerman's Creamery.

I invite you to stop into Zingerman's Deli to taste a few vinegars and to have some fun experimenting at home!

Grace

Grace Singleton,
Managing Partner,
Zingerman's Delicatessen

cambodian peppercorn

As you may know by now, I'm in love with peppercorns. The other day I was listening to an interview with a very well-known chef, who I respect a lot. The talk was rolling along and I was nodding my head at most of what he had to say. We were well-aligned about the importance of ingredients, the critical role that staying calm plays in running a good restaurant, about the importance of learning and studying history and a whole host of other topics. But all of a sudden I got stopped in my mental tracks (I was running while I was listening, and honestly, I almost stopped, literally) when I heard him say, "I'm not big on pepper. I just don't understand putting pepper on so many things. I just don't get it!" Holy cow. I was speechless. Stunned. Not like pepper? Seriously?

All of which brings me to the subject at hand—a newly-arrived-in North-America peppercorn, which comes here all the way from a place I'd never ever imagined I'd be purchasing pepper from: Cambodia! Pepper from India—especially, Telicherry—for sure! I've also enjoyed pepper from Indonesia, Sri Lanka, and Ecuador. But Cambodia? Who knew?

I do now! And now that I know it, I will never forget! Cambodian pepper, Kampot especially, is worth paying very close attention to.

In the coming months, you'll see on our shelves Kampot Cambodian peppercorns that also come in white, black, and green. The green are unripe berries—fruity and slightly sweet. The black peppercorns are fully ripe and oxidized in the drying process—winy, rich, deep, dark, a great go-to for day-to-day dining deliciousness! The white have had their outer black layer removed by soaking in water—it's softer, subtly, but still significantly spicy, particularly great for cream dishes but really on anything. But to kick off our campaign for Cambodian pepper we picked the rarely seen, Kampot red peppercorn!

What is it? Ethne explained:

"The red Kampot pepper is, of course, picked at the peak harvest time and is diligently separated from any green peppercorns that may share the same vine. Once separated, the red corns are then briefly dunked in boiling water—to maintain their pomegranate colour—then quickly sun-dried.

The PGI (Protected Geographical Indication) certification is also a part of this peppercorn's profile, which is important on a couple of levels. It proves that the pepper does, in fact, come from the region recognized and celebrated historically as the geographical provenance of this highly prized product. It also corroborates the social, moral, and ethical responsibilities that this producer chooses to endorse.

This pepper deserves its well-earned, worldwide reputation, but more importantly, its producers who have risen to the challenge of putting people first, deserve our gratitude, admiration, and recognition for behaving like human beings."

Great way to take a piece of fish to the next level; try steak with red peppercorn sauce; coarse grind it onto a salad; crack it into butter and make a red peppercorn butter for dapping on potatoes, pork, or pasta!

cajun blackening spice blend

I took a tin of this spice blend home out of curiosity and loyalty to the folks at Épices de Cru. The blackening process was started around the time we opened the Deli by the late Chef Paul Prudhomme at his amazing restaurant, K-Paul. While I regularly ordered blackened fish in its "homeland" when I visited New Orleans, I never did much about it up here in Ann Arbor. One night I brought home a couple pieces of Norwegian sea trout from Monahan's and cooked it with the Épices de Cru blackening spices. Wow! Spicy. Enticing. Engaging. Intriguing. As my grandmother used to say, "Delish!"

There are of course a couple hundred blackening spice blends on the market. But fancy labels aside, you can't make a world class blend from so-so spices. And one (of the many) things I know about the de Vienne family is that every single spice they use is stand-alone-superb. Including the ones that go into this Cajun Blackening Spice blend. Check out the ingredient list—I challenge you to find another blackening blend made from such wonderful raw materials: real Spanish pimenton (paprika); chile arbol from Mexico; Maras (pronounced Marash) red pepper from Turkey; white pepper from Indonesia; black pepper from India, oregano from Turkey, too. A little high-end dried garlic and onion to round it out.

While I've been using it for fish, it's equally excellent on pork, chicken, steak, or for that matter, on vegetables, eggs or fresh cheese. I'm imagining the Cajun Blackening spice blend in potato salad, added to tomato soup, tossed with hot pasta or rice, sprinkled as a garnish onto bean dishes, added to mashed potatoes, or about 22 other things. I'll keep you posted on how things turn out. In the meantime, let me know how your cooking experiments go!

Here's one great recipe from the de Vienne family. Easy and excellent!

"Our friend Sylviane is a fantastic cook who, like the rest of us, is known to forget things in the oven. One day, she served the most delicious, dark-roasted vegetables, crisped to perfection. The natural sugars of the fresh produce, and the fact that they had been left to sweat in the salted spice blend for 2 hours prior to roasting, created a dark crust that was impossible to resist."

1 bunch of small, fresh carrots with leaves

1 large fennel bulb

1 large parsnip

1 Tbsp Cajun blackening spices, ground

1 Tbsp extra virgin olive oil

Clean carrots well. Cut fennel and parsnip into pieces the size of the carrots.

Put vegetables in a bowl with spices and oil. Mix, making sure to cover the vegetables evenly.

Let rest for 2 hours before placing on a baking sheet.

Heat oven to 375°F.

Cook for 30 minutes before turning vegetables.

Check every 10 minutes to ensure that vegetables are caramelized to your liking as cooking time may vary.

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BRINGING Art & Beauty BACK TO ALASKAN SALMON FISHING

By Ari Weinweig

In his fine little book *Culture Care*, artist Makamoto Fujimora writes, “A healthy culture is impossible without the participation of artists and other leaders who are educated intellectually, trained experientially, formed spiritually, and growing morally. Beauty is both a goal and a catalyst for each of these elements.” I couldn’t agree more. People who will bring that kind of beauty are quietly, but effectively, making the world a better place, one small gentle, meaningful action at a time. With her work at Shoreline Wild Salmon, all the way out in Alaska, Marie Rose is bringing art alive in the very practical here and now. She certainly seems to be the sort of person Mr. Fujimora is referring to. Marie is working to preserve natural beauty and, at the same time, bring a small briny bit of that beauty to the rest of us, in the form of some of the best tasting salmon in the world. Her work with wild Alaskan salmon is setting the pace for sustainable food systems, for flavor, for people and for a positive future.

Falling in Love

So how did a girl from a Battle Creek, where the closest big body of water is nearly two hours away, start a business catching and shipping salmon in the Pacific Northwest? Fishing is not how she ever imagined her life would go. As an anarchist professor and poet Paul Goodman once said, “Having a vocation is like falling in love, and it works out.” It sounds like it’s a similar story for Marie.

“I went to Michigan State and got a degree in Social Work,” Marie shared. “Most of my advocacy work in college was focused towards women’s issues: reproductive justice and domestic violence awareness. When I accepted a job in Alaska focused on salmon conservation, it was on a total whim. That job grounded me in creating this life in salmon. I’d never even eaten salmon before I moved there. In fact, I hated salmon. When my mom cooked it when I was a kid, I always ate something else. But all these years later, I moved to Alaska and found out that I wanted to make my life about wild salmon. Once I was here, I realized I’d never had good salmon and that’s why I didn’t eat it.”

Marie is hardly the only one in the Midwest who had that sort of experience. Fortunately, her good work with Shoreline is making it possible for more and more Michiganders to experience salmon in its superb, wild, delicious state. Five years after heading west just ‘because’, Marie is a passionate fish buyer, a partner in a growing small business, a purveyor of some of the best salmon in the country, and someone who’s creating a constructive and sustainable future for a famous fishery.

So how did Marie Rose go from working behind a desk to being outside on a boat?

“My first job in Alaska was to challenge the proposal of a large scale mine in Bristol Bay, an area of Alaska that provides half the world’s sockeye salmon, by encouraging the EPA to conduct a thorough watershed analysis to assess potential risks towards salmon. The threat mines like these can pose towards pristine salmon habitats is terrifying. In Southeast Alaska (where we live and fish), we’re near the Canadian border where there are more than a dozen large-scale open-pit mines in various stages of development and operation. All of which are upstream from us. It’s terrifying!”

“After a year working in the office I decided I wanted to get out, so I took a job on the Shoreline Scow. It’s an all-woman run operation. The job ended a short stint bartending in Juneau. Keith Heller and Joe Emerson, who are now my business partners, came and played music at the open mic night at the bar on Thursdays. As I started to get to know them, especially once we were out on the water together, I learned that not all fishermen treats their fish the same. Joe really had an incredible method of handling the fish and it was a lot different than what I’d seen others do. It was really noticeable.”

The bad news? Although plenty of Alaskan fishermen are aware of the techniques Joe’s using—he did not invent them

and there’s no patent in play—many folks just don’t put them into practice.

“The way it works up there, there’s just no incentive for fisherman to do the extra work. They’ve always gotten the same price for the fish whether they do the extra work or not,” Marie said.

Sad. For salmon. For people. For the planet. For us. What was once a craft gets crushed by the rush for efficiency, standardization and lower costs.

The Art of Craft

Sad though it is, I can’t say I was all that surprised to hear this story. It’s the same lament I’ve heard over the years from cheesemakers, dairy farmers, olive oil producers, pork farmers, and pretty much everyone else who worked with artisan food for the first three quarters of the 20th century. Artisan commitment to craft, while it creates a high value artistically, is assigned the same value as ‘comparable’ offerings produced with far less care. The best quality is blended with the bad; the price is the same for both. The result of that pattern was the sad state of good food back in the early ‘80s when we opened the Deli (and of course, for 20 or 30 years before that as well).

Craft is crushed by the drive for lower prices, longer shelf life and less natural variation from batch to batch, or piece to piece. In this case, salmon fishermen in Alaska were essentially being offered a single price by big buyers who didn’t really give a set of fish scales whether what they were buying was off the charts top choice, or just barely good enough to sell. They all got the same price.

Marie explains the situation in more detail. For most of modern Alaskan fishing history, “There’s been no connection between the fisherman and who eats the fish they catch. When I worked on a fish-buying tender [i.e., buying fish for big company contracts], it was all nameless. We had no say in the boats we could turn away...some of these guys would offload fish that...I’d be thinking, ‘How did you catch this beautiful fish in this pristine water and you just caught it and how did you mess it up like this?’ Some of it just isn’t handled the way it could have been. It was really disappointing to me. But that’s what some people are selling,” Marie shared.

Answering the Call

Fujimori writes about “genesis moments”—moments in our lives, often when something goes wrong, (frequently really wrong), that essentially shocks us into creative action. “I have discovered,” he says, “that something is awakened through failure, tragedy and disappointment. It is a place of learning and potential creativity. In such moments you get lost in despair or denial, or you can recognize failure and run toward the hope of something new.”

The energy that comes from those moments can power us forward to make our art. To find our vocation. To make a difference. Answering the call to escape her desk job staring down a nameless fish seems to have worked really well for Marie Rose.

In October of 2016, the three started a new business—Shoreline Wild Salmon—to sell what they were catching and processing at such high quality levels, directly to people who care about quality, from home consumers to chefs, that are willing to pay more for a higher quality product. It’s the seafood equivalent of Farm to Table. Maybe from shore to store? It makes total sense, and I would argue, a much more creative way to work.

“The way we’re doing it with Shoreline,” Marie said, “people get paid a price [higher than ‘market’] that’s worth their while.”

While it might seem mundane to frame finance and craft in the same construct, this is exactly the sort of meaningfully artistic way to live that Fujimora suggests we find. Shoreline is not just some slick, superficial marketing campaign—their product is markedly better than most of what’s on the market!

“Our salmon is all pressure bled,” Marie shared. “It takes a lot more time. We immediately cut the gills out and take the artery out and we insert this tiny hose that goes right into the main artery and flush the blood out really quickly and then we gut it. When the salmon is bled and gutted so quickly it really increases the quality of the fish. Most people don’t use the pressure bleeding—there’s just not a general sense of urgency to handle the salmon all that well.”

What’s the alternative to the methods Marie, Joe and Keith are so committed to? Basically, it’s the lower quality salmon that dominates the market. It’s not as fresh; the flavor and integrity of the fish has suffered significantly long before it gets close to a consumer.

Most folks stand by and shake their heads at the problems that surround them and the frustrations they face, eventually giving up. Marie and her partners, by contrast, have created their own path. Or maybe, thinking of the sea, I should say, set their own course.

Health Attracts Health

Fujimori puts forward the idea that to make good art we need to think “generationally”—to go beyond what we want and need next week, or even what we desire to do in our own lifetime.

“Artists at their best,” he says, “help us with such questions by presenting an expansive vision of life that reveals beauty in ever-wider zones.”

It’s clear, by Fujimori’s high standards, Marie is an artist.

“I think we owe it to the salmon that have kept us (and this state) alive,” Marie said. “Salmon are essential to all of us in Alaska. They nurture our families and they fertilize our forests. Ultimately, they are the ones who teach us how to live and work on nature’s clock; they choose the pace at which we move. They are the gift of choice on holidays, and are the center of our family dinners and neighborhood potlucks, proving that they are best when shared. I suppose that’s what I am most worried about—that our lack of quality control impacts our ability to share the bounty of the resource that is a staple of our lives.”



Part of the beauty of this work is that it's not just about preserving something of historical interest in isolation. The type of conservation that Marie and crew are making happen is all about honoring the ecosystem—in all its elements—by encouraging the rest of us to stop buying below-cost products, and, instead, pay an appropriate price for our fish. When we do, we get high quality, build sustainability, preserve the natural resource and, in the end, create what Fujimori refers to as a “generative work.” When we move forward in this way, everyone wins—the fish are treated mindfully and respectfully, the fisherman can make a living and feel pride in their product, you and I get to eat really fantastic fish. And because it's generative—we all feel better for it—every one in the chain wants to go out and do more of it!

From pretty much every angle I can see, Shoreline salmon is pretty special. In fact, as I think about it, Shoreline's work is really representative of most everything we work to do here in the ZCoB—great flavor, traditional production, something that was once “poor people's food,” but is now hard to get; something special that most mainstream food businesses won't go to the trouble or expense to handle, but food where you really can taste the difference.

Swimming Upstream

“Don't be a bottom feeder,” Fujimori advised a group of musicians who were out to make their mark replicating the most popular genres of the moment. This, Fujimori says is not great art; it may make some money, but it doesn't make magic. Instead, he advises, “Endeavor to go upstream into the tributaries and find clear, pure waters. Create upstream, and then what you create will affect the whole stream.”

Instead of getting stuck with the commercial bottom feeders, Marie swam upstream, like a wild Alaskan salmon, pushed past the challenges, and in the process, she found a new and more rewarding way towards a positive future for fishing.

Wild salmon, if you don't know, go back up the river to spawn. The distance they travel after coming in from the Bering Sea can be mind-boggling—for some of them, their trip is about as long a trip as a drive from Seattle to Minneapolis. As you would imagine, all that swimming upstream does wonders for the culinary profile of the salmon; the commensurate high fat content and well-developed muscle tone make for some pretty special fish. The flavor is bigger, richer; impressively clean in the finish but with lots of that really wonderful mellow, rich meatiness that to me is the hallmark of wild salmon.

Marie's and Fujimori's stories are surely, and supremely, congruent—both in spirit and in practice. The proposal Fujimori put forward is exactly what she and her partners are putting into action every day. Rather than argue against what's wrong, Marie made the decision to do this the hard way, fighting to go ‘upstream’ in the fishing business, just as the salmon do, to find ‘clear pure waters’. From which, overtime, she will surely affect the whole system. Marie's work is from both a pure heart and pure waters. And the outcome is delicious—both in business, and also sautéed up and served for dinner.

Fujimori posits that, “Our actions can be assessed based on whether or not they lead toward beauty.” When it comes to working with Marie and her partners at Shoreline, it's easy to make that assessment. Every time we place an order, every time we share thoughts, every time I eat some of the salmon, I know quickly and confidently that beauty—present, past and future—comes to the fore. Like the salmon swimming upstream, working this way isn't the easiest. But the outcomes sure are amazing!

Sometime in early to mid-July the Roadhouse will start getting wild King Salmon from Marie and her partners. And Coho salmon as well. Marie mentioned, “We hope to be able to deliver Cohos throughout our season from July 1st to September 20nd. The King salmon fishing is much more limited right now!”

Personally, I can't wait. If you haven't had wild salmon before—and sadly—most Americans who live outside the Pacific Northwest might not—you're in for a treat. Please know that every time you order it, you're helping to preserve the natural beauty that has become a calling for this caring young woman from Battle Creek. And to help her spread that beauty, through better eating, into our own community here.

Ari Ari Weinweig
Zingerman's Co-founder

“Generative thinking,” Fujimori said, “is fueled by generosity because it so often must work against a mindset that has survival and utility in the foreground.” And generative thinking is, I would say, exactly what Marie and her partners are doing. The good news? In nature, beauty builds beauty. Health attracts health. Someone—like the folks at Shoreline—starts down a new more creative and interesting, if previously untrodden, path. And then, awhile later, when things can be seen to be working well, others follow.

In fact, that's been the case with the salmon—Shoreline's sales are on the rise! So much so that they've been able to bring others onboard to share their art as well.

“We've started buying from a couple of other boats,” Marie shared. “So you're teaching them the techniques that can produce better quality fish. And you pay them a better price. A lot of the fisherman know the technique, but they don't use it. It's much easier to grow by knowing who already uses it, and then working with them.”

As Fujimori writes, “Generative paths will birth resourcefulness, patience and general creativity in all of life. They lead to cultural—and human—thriving.”

Hopefully Shoreline's early success will continue to build in the next few years, and then, for a long time to come.

What's on Shoreline's Horizon Line

What's next for Shoreline Wild Salmon? “We'll be three years old in the fall,” Marie shared. “The main reason I wanted to start this company after I looked at what was available in Michigan, people couldn't get it at this quality.” Happily, that situation is shifting. “All this happened so fast,” she added. “My dad worked in marketing and sales his whole life so I grew up learning a bit from his experiences. I always have these wild ideas. As with most of my adventures,” she added with a smile, “My dad was a bit...concerned. We didn't really know what we were doing...but now he's working with me delivering the fish. It was pretty wild picking the salmon up in Detroit the first time. Now my parents love it. They never want to leave it. All of which means we can now start working on where we want to go from here, to take this work to the next level.”

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HOW TO WRITE A Vision of Success

By Elnian Gilbert

Before I get too far into this article about how to write a vision, it feels appropriate to share a vision of what success looks like for this article.



It's a sunny Friday afternoon in early September 2019, and I'm sitting at my computer in the office, Zingerman's Coffee Co. latte in hand, diving into my email inbox. I see the title "Thanks for How to Write a Vision" as the subject line from a name I don't recognize—it's someone who recently came across the July/August newsletter article. They're responding to the challenge at the end of the article, asking folks to share the visions they write, and wow have these visions been fantastic! There's a vision of change from an accounting firm, going from one brand of coffee to another in the break room. There is a vision of a successful product launch from a software company, who wrote again months later to let us know that the vision came to fruition.

This vision is from a retail employee who would like to become a manager, sharing the story of what it looks like when they're in that role. The hope for articles is always that they'll help people use our tools to make their work easier and better, and it feels that this one hit the mark.

What you read above is the kind of vision that I love; the short, quick vision that sets out what you're going for on a smaller scale of success. At ZingTrain, we spend a fair amount of time teaching about the BIG visions—the long-term picture of what success looks like for an organization, 10 to 15 years in the future. That kind of vision is incredibly helpful - it really sets the goalpost of what we want to accomplish. But once that vision is written, it's all of the little visions that nestle under it that really help us achieve that big vision of success.

What I'm going to share with you is our time-tested, much-beloved process for writing a vision of just about anything. The examples I'll use are for a smaller, shorter-term vision, but the same basic process works for the large, long-term vision as well.

how to write your own personal Vision!

Step One: Pick Your Topic

What is the scope of your vision? What problem do you want to solve, accomplishment to realize, or change to make? Keep it specific and focused.

Step Two: Pick Your Time Frame

The time frame will depend on the scope of your vision. If it's a relatively minor change to the way you organize office supplies, the completion date of the vision might be two weeks out. When I've written a vision before a keynote (example at the end of the post,) the timing has ranged from a week in advance to the morning of.

I would encourage you to put the time frame out a little further than your first instinct - give yourself room for reflection, new information, and to not get too hampered by how you'll make things happen.

Step Three: Write a List of "Prouds"

Start a new document on the computer, turn to a fresh page in your notebook, and take 5 minutes to list all of the things you're proud of. Personal, professional, organizational - it's all good fodder for "Prouds!" No one will see it, it's for you.

This step is one that many folks want to skip, and I've seen it cause visual discomfort when we're leading a workshop in person. However, it's a key part of the process, and integral to getting your head in the right space before you start drafting the vision.

Step Four: Write the First Draft of the Vision

Now that the pump has been primed, you're ready to start writing! To set it up, get to a fresh page in your notebook or the next page of a Doc, and write 5 important letters across the top of the page. Ready?

Writing DRAFT across the top of the page is helpful in two regards. First, it gives you permission to be carefree with spelling, grammar, and punctuation - it's simply a draft! Second, when you share it with others, it lets them know that it's not final so they can give you feedback.

Use Hot Pen

This is putting pen to paper and not lifting it until you've got a healthy stretch of words out on the paper. Or that your fingers are warmed up to keep typing and you're not focused so much on what the next idea will be, the words are flowing out at the pace of your brain. Some will sometimes start writing swear words until other words kick in; ZingTrain's former Managing Partner, Stas' Kazmierski, who taught us visioning, used to write "Mary had a little lamb ..." to get his brain connected to the page.

Go Quickly

This goes hand in hand with Hot Pen - don't stop to edit, don't focus on those red squiggly lines under misspelled words - turn that off if you're like me and can't stand it! This exercise is about getting those ideas out, you'll have time to fix and edit later.

Get Into the Future

We write visions in present tense, as though we can see it happening. It's not "We're going to," it's "We are." Or even, "We did!" And we write with descriptive detail, so it's easier to picture yourself in that moment of accomplishment.

Go For Something Great!

Otherwise, what's the point? Even for something that seems like it's not a big deal, like a change to the coffee, a vision that reads "The new coffee is better and people aren't complaining about it too much." is not as compelling as a vision along the lines of "I could smell the scent of freshly brewed coffee wafting down the hallway before I even got close to the breakroom. The notes of caramel and toast let me know that we were serving our custom blend today, and I can't wait to take my first sip!"

Get Personal

The more you can include impact and emotions, the more other people will connect with and support your vision. Let the reader be able to picture themselves in your shoes, take the journey with you.

Write From the Heart (not the Head)

Our head often gets stuck on the HOW (versus the WHAT of a vision), and we can start thinking, "Oooh, I don't know how that's going to happen," or "I don't think I can get people on board by then." The vision is about getting out of your head what success looks like - you can do the strategic planning once the vision is done.

Let Yourself Go

People are often worried that they're "doing it wrong" - taking too long to write the vision, or not long enough; too much detail, or not enough detail; too much on their feelings and the sensory component, etc. Again, you're starting the draft, so get the "Voices" out of your way and remember that you can always change your draft!

What Comes next:

Step Five: Review and Re-Draft

Step Six: Get Input from Content Experts

Step Seven: Share the Vision

I'm not including too much detail in the last three steps for two reasons: one, in a shorter term, smaller vision, we don't often spend too much time going past a first or second draft, particularly for something that's more personal, like a vacation. Two, this is where the vision writing becomes iterative - or we keep working on it, make adjustments, getting input, editing, adding, getting more input, and so on - until it comes to a point where we're ready to say "Okay, good enough!"

Now that you know the process, I'll share another example of a vision, drawn from real-life experience. I was invited to give a keynote speech for a conference, on the topic of Visioning. What better way to kick off a keynote on visioning than to read the audience MY vision for that keynote?!? In part, it helped set the tone of what I hoped for from the participants, and the second benefit was to demonstrate the vulnerability that can come with visioning. What you'll see below is the exact, unedited vision I wrote about a week in advance of that keynote:

*It's 11:15 am on Tuesday, December 13th, and I'm heading out of the room after the Visioning keynote at the Great Lakes Fruit & Vegetable EXPO, feeling great about how it went! When I first stood in front of the group and looked out at the sea of 300 faces, I felt a flock of butterflies in my stomach. Then as I took a deep breath *take a deep breath* and thought about my intentions for the session, the tension eased, and off I went. It's almost a year to the day from the Visioning keynote at the Virginia Farm to Table Conference and the reception from the group was just as warm and welcoming - it was a delight to be presenting again to a group of people so dedicated to good work. During the exercises, you could hear a pin drop as folks wrote in their workbooks, and I could see several people shaking their hands out to alleviate writing cramps. I am confident that many great visions got their start today, and I'm looking forward to hearing from folks as they complete their visions! At the end of the keynote, many people came up to give me a high 5, which left everyone's energy high heading into the next session.*

Now I can imagine you asking, "What happened, how did it go??" Exactly as written. Even better, I did a breakout session the next day on putting visioning to work, and many people who were in the keynote attended that session, asking great questions and listening intently.

To encourage you to give visioning a try, I'd like to issue a challenge to you! Write a vision for something you have coming up - could be for a conference presentation, or a clean-out and re-organization of the supply closet, or your own professional growth. Send that vision to zingtrain@zinger.com (with your permission to share the vision as an example for others) and we'll send YOU an electronic version of one of Ari's visioning pamphlets.

Like any newly-learned skill that feels uncomfortable at first, once you start using visioning every day, it becomes easier and more of a habit. As it is at Zinger's, visioning can become a part of the fabric of your organization where just about everything starts with a vision of greatness.



Elman Gilbert,
Keynote Speaker & Trainer,
ZingTrain

make time to figure out where you want to go

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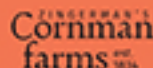
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