

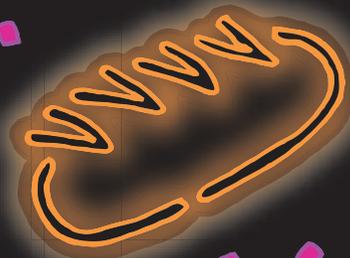
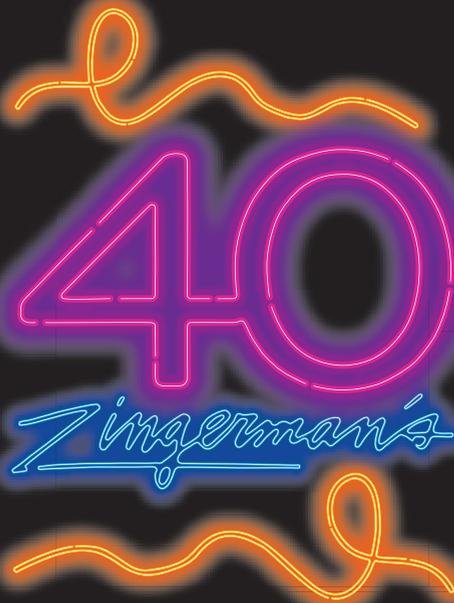
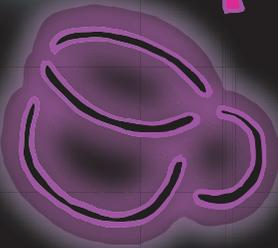
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Zingerman's news

isSue #291 mar-apr 2022

Happy Anniversary to You!

Thank you for 40 years of kindness and support!!!



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Z.A.N.



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The Importance of Gratitude

in Getting to Sustainable Greatness

bringing beauty to our daily lives enhances the health of our organizational ecosystems



Late last fall I was listening to a podcast that featured author Anne Lamott. I love her books (*Bird by Bird* had a huge influence on me); she's wonderfully wise and equally witty. About halfway through the conversation, I unexpectedly burst out laughing when I heard her quip: "I was 35 when I discovered that a B-plus was a good grade. If I got a B-plus, it was like, 'Well, I don't understand why this isn't an A-minus, and do you still have time or can you do the report over?'" It was pretty much the same when I was a kid. A B-plus was better than failing, but not by much. Like Anne Lamott, I grew up in a well-educated, caring family that, in great part, showed love and affection by asking why we didn't do better. I can't remember the word "perfectionism" ever coming up, but that is in practice what we learned. It's not like no one ever gave—or got—a compliment, but our young brains were clearly conditioned to enter a conversation by first, quickly, identifying what was wrong.

I also learned a lot of things growing up that have served me well—reading regularly, sticking with what I started, treating everyone with respect, and other life skills that have been hugely helpful to my work over the years. Focusing on what *isn't* good enough, I can see in hindsight, did help to give me a consistent drive for improvement. Still, *Natural Law #10* (see *Zingerman's Guide to Good Leading, Part 1: A Lapsed Anarchist's Approach to Building a Better Business* for more on the Natural Laws) says that "strengths lead to weaknesses"—whatever we do well, carried to an extreme, can also cause problems. The downside, in this case, is that most humans aren't all that happy about getting critiqued as a way to show love and care, since, as Robert Greenleaf once said, "Criticism has its place, but as a total preoccupation is sterile."

The good news is that the drive and determination that I learned as a child work just as well when it comes to the practice of more positive approaches. It's nearly 30 years ago now that my study of leadership introduced me to methods that, unlike what Anne Lamott and I both learned as kids, led me towards appreciation. Gratitude, I began to understand, actually did more to help us get to greatness than griping. Visioning (focus on a positive future, instead of present-day problems) and Appreciative Inquiry (lead organizational change by building on what's already working well) were awkward for me, but over time, they blew my mind. Later I read about Positive Psychology (work for well-being

rather than fixing "what's wrong" with people). None of this, I started to understand, was about floofy feel-good statements; leading with appreciation, it turns out, is all about efficacy. It is simply better business—a way of being in the world that helps us live better lives. Ultimately, my study of appreciation altered my worldview; instead of starting first with what needed to be done better, I learned to begin by looking for beauty. Sam Keen, from whom I've learned so much through both his books and in-person conversations over the years, says, "Through gratitude we perceive existence as an unconditional gift, a blessing."

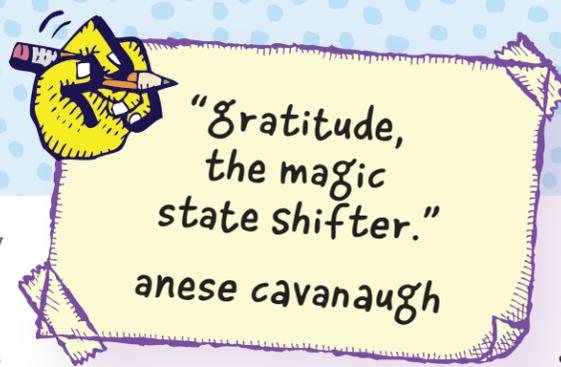
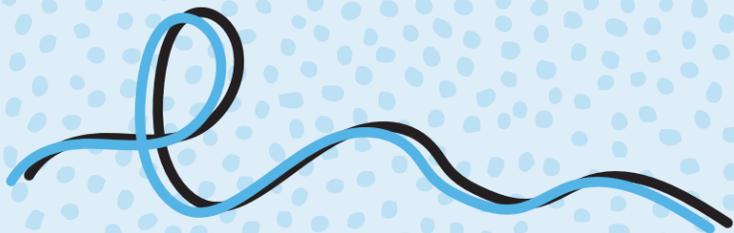
Study after study shows that a regular regimen of gratitude and appreciation gives us more openness to change, reduces turnover, and enhances collaboration. It also increases optimism and helps us hold course towards long-term outcomes. Leading with the positive opens our minds, stimulates creativity, improves connection, and deepens our sense of belonging. It benefits relationships, not just with the person we're thanking, but with everyone we know. It makes diversity and inclusion radically more likely to be real parts of our lives. Of particular interest as we work our way through the pandemic, it helps us better handle the impact of trauma. Increased levels of gratitude have been statistically shown to increase employee retention. All of which initiates a very virtuous cycle. As psychologist Barbara Fredrickson writes, "Gratitude opens your

heart and carries the urge to give back—to do something good in return, either for the person who helped you or for someone else."

All of my experience with the benefits of increased appreciation, at times, makes me wonder: Why, after so many peer-reviewed science-based studies and so many practical applications like ours (and if you're reading this, probably yours as well), are best practices like gratitude still sloughed off in the mainstream work world as pleasant, but still barely of significance, "soft skills"? The only answer I have is that most people in business have been "brought up," as both Anne Lamott and I were, with belief systems that lead them still, ineffectively, in the other direction. The approach is something along the lines of "Find fault, Criticize, Fix the problem—Repeat regularly." You have only to look briefly at the news, or hear stories of painfully destructive workplaces, to know that

antipathy and not-very-constructive criticism are, for most people, the order of the day. As Daniel Goleman writes, "What's wrong makes the news; what's fine does not." The good news, though, is that we don't need anyone else's permission to get going with gratitude; better still, the benefits can, quietly, begin accruing quickly. Having gratitude and appreciation as part of our everyday work experience pays big dividends in our day-to-day lives. Our feelings of gratitude, Dr. Andrew Hueberman and others say, grow when we hear about how grateful others are for the support and care of those around them. We don't even have to know the people who have been helped, which means that listening to podcasts or reading books about positive people like Anne Lamott actually enhances our emotional health and the effectiveness of our work.

With that in mind, I'll share two stories from my past few days at work that helped me remember just how powerful this quiet work of focusing on the positives can be. The first happened last Friday night when I was working on the floor at the Roadhouse. A mother and her daughter, the latter probably around 20 or so, sat to have dinner at the chef's counter. It's a spot that encourages conversation between customers and staff, and we chatted briefly a couple of times while I was passing by. Near the end of their meal, they were talking with their server, Sharon, who asked me to swing by. "They're wondering why everyone around here seems



so happy and like they're enjoying themselves," she said smiling. I smiled too. "It's what we do!" I said. The daughter shook her head and said, "It's great to see. This is the complete opposite of what it was like in the last restaurant I worked at."

Two days later, I was teaching an internal class. It was about Servant Leadership, which is all about the leader's primary role being to serve the organization, not the other way around. (You can learn more about it in Secret #23 in Part 2.) About two-thirds of the way through the two-hour class, I was sharing that we have a recommended ratio of four-parts positive recognition and gratitude given to one-part constructive criticism. I'm not sure where we learned it, but we've been using it for years and, quite simply, it works pretty well. A gentleman who's only recently joined the organization in a leadership role raised his hand. After I invited him to chime in, he shook his head side to side. "In my old job, all they did was look for what you were doing wrong. If you made a mistake, by the end of the day, pretty much everyone in the business would know about it. I spent my whole day just trying not to make a mistake." His story brought tears to my eyes; he's such a great guy and already a big asset to our organization. How long have leaders, looking first to find the flaws, left capable people on the organizational sidelines, when they could have been an integral part of the business' success?

Are positive appreciation and gratitude the only reasons these two stories played out as they did? Of course not. One of the big benefits of the ecosystem metaphor for me is that it reinforces just how many elements must come together to make a moderately healthy, though ever imperfect, organization work the way it does. A healthy vibrant culture, an inspiring and strategically sound vision, well-designed systems, positive financial results, hope, positive beliefs, emotional awareness, humbleness, getting out of hierarchical thinking, inclusion, and a hundred other things are all important contributors. Still, I have no hesitation in saying that our work with gratitude has been a game-changer. As Anne Lamott says, "Gratitude begins in our hearts and then dovetails into behavior. It almost always makes you willing to be of service, which is where the joy resides."

Part of what got me thinking about all this in the first place is a good question that came my way the other day from a coworker: "Where would gratitude go in the metaphor of the organizational ecosystem?" A series of thinking sessions and a couple mornings' worth of journaling later, I arrived at an answer: I'm going to suggest that gratitude in our organizational ecosystems is the metaphorical equivalent of beauty. When beauty is present, everyone benefits. Same goes for gratitude. And as John O'Donohue writes,

To behold beauty dignifies your life; it heals you and calls you out beyond the smallness of your own self-limitation to experience new horizons. To experience beauty is to have your life enlarged.

All of which, I can see from my studies, is also true for active appreciation. It brings dignity, it heals, and it reminds us how interdependent we are; it enlarges our lives and widens our worldviews. Beauty, like gratitude, comes to life though only because *someone else* made the effort to take notice. As David Whyte writes, "Gratitude arises from paying attention, from being awake in the presence of everything that lives within and without us." Same goes, I would posit, for beauty. Gratitude, like beauty, is never urgent, but it's always important. Both benefit

many and generally cost very little to make happen. When we say something to those we appreciate, and when we pause even for a few seconds to take in the beauty that is always around us, our world gets a bit brighter. As John O'Donohue says, "No one is immune to beauty." It's the same, it seems, with gratitude. Even lifelong pessimists, research shows, can be shifted towards a more positive mindset in just a few weeks of simple gratitude practices. In the process, virtuous cycles start up again and hundreds of other stories, like the ones I shared, unfold. Once we commit to paying attention, both beauty and gratitude expand exponentially. As Henri Matisse once said, "There are always flowers for those who want to see them."

Speaking of seeing, my thinking on all this was helped hugely by this bit from John O'Donohue:

We have often heard that beauty is in the eye of the beholder. This is usually taken to mean that the sense of beauty is utterly subjective ... The statement has another, more subtle meaning: if our style of looking becomes beautiful, then beauty will become visible and shine forth for us. We will be surprised to discover beauty in unexpected places where the ungraceful eye would never linger. The graced eye can glimpse beauty anywhere, for beauty does not reserve itself for special elite moments or instances ... when we beautify our gaze, the grace of hidden beauty becomes our joy and our sanctuary.

Once we "beautify our gaze," we can see good cause for gratitude pretty much everywhere. None of us, it is beautifully clear to me now, accomplish anything on our own. Just to get a single sandwich to the table at the Deli, or a gift box delivered from Mail Order is, no exaggeration, the collective and coordinated work of hundreds, if not thousands of people. Creating a culture of appreciation means that we make sure that everyone—no matter what they do or how long they've been here—learns and hears from their peers how much they matter. Sharing credit, assuming it's done authentically, builds credibility. We don't always get this right, but we most definitely, I know, need each other to make great things happen. As Mahmoud Darwish writes, "The poem is always incomplete; the butterflies make it whole."

To make the kind of positive culture and attention to gratitude we aspire to into a daily organizational

reality requires equal emphasis on effective systems and extended repletion. As Assata Shakur once wrote, "Theory without practice

is just as incomplete as practice without theory. The two have to go together." The idea of positive appreciation is inspiring, but to get gratitude to be rooted into our organizational culture, we have to stick with it, diligently, day-in and day-out for many years. When we do so, we have much to gain. As Sam Keen suggests,

Make a ritual of pausing frequently to appreciate and be thankful. ... Notice that the more you become a connoisseur of gratitude, the less you are the victim of resentment, depression, and despair. Gratitude will act as an elixir that will gradually dissolve the hard shell of your ego—your need to possess and control—transform you into a generous being. The sense of gratitude produces true spiritual alchemy, makes us magnanimous—large souled.

This has, it turns out, been verified repeatedly by neuroscience. As Dr. Andrew Huberman says, "Most of us need a gratitude practice. The most potent tool for gratitude is going to be one you repeat over and over again." There are a whole host of ways that I can see now that we have made gratitude and appreciation a consistent part of our culture and also embedded into our systems, since, as James Clear reminds us, "You do not rise to the level of your goals. You fall to the level of your systems." As I detailed earlier, positive reinforcement is part of our recipe for Servant Leadership. Same goes for our 3 Steps to Great Service and 5 Steps to Handling Customer Complaints. We write up compliments on what we call "Code Greens," and then share those regularly throughout the organization.

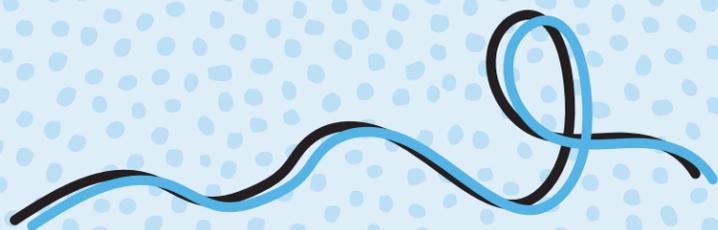
Our emphasis on dignity, humility, asking for help regularly, etc. all contribute to the mix. While the "good" and the "bad" are nearly always interwoven, it's a rare day that I don't encounter multiple stories of appreciation in my email, in meetings, or in casual conversation.

One of the biggest impacts on our work came from a simple, down-to-earth, no-cost practice that my friend Lex Alexander taught me years ago. By sharing it, Lex gave me one of the greatest gifts I've ever gotten—we end every meeting with "appreciations." Here's what I wrote in Part 1:

Appreciations can be of anything or anyone: someone in the room or not in the room; something work-related or not; accomplishments past, present, or future. No one is required to say anything, but people usually do. And this one small exercise has made a huge impact over the years. Think of it like ending a meal with a good cup of coffee: the people in the meeting almost always go back out into the organizational world with positive feelings. And because we do it at every meeting, it really disciplines us to devote time and mental energy to positive recognition.

If you want to bring more beauty to your ecosystem, start doing appreciations soon. Even if you're the only one who says anything at first, the health of your organization and those who are part of it will slowly but surely improve. As Andrew Huberman says, "The most potent practice is where you receive thanks." This means that every time we appreciate someone, we are improving the quality of their life, their health, and their work. They





begin to come alive. O'Donohue says, "When beauty touches our lives, the moment becomes luminous." I've learned from doing this that the impact of gratitude is often most powerful when it's given to people who aren't accustomed to getting it; recognizing someone you rarely work with, honoring a new staff member, reaching out to say thanks to folks who do their work quietly behind the scenes, etc. can have a remarkably positive effect. (Try sending a thank you note to the person who does your payroll, your mother, or the man or woman who brings the mail—it will not, I guarantee, go unnoticed!)

I do wonder sometimes what the impact might be should the Senate agree to end every session with appreciations, but instead I'll smile, stay positive, and share a bunch of my own. I feel incredibly grateful to be here in such a welcoming and supportive community, working with so many committed, quality-focused colleagues. We have amazing suppliers, and some of the most compassionate and caring customers I've ever encountered. Whatever Zingerman's has contributed to the community over nearly 40 years now, it has happened only because of the work of thousands of staff members, and the support of what must by now be millions of great customers here and around the country, and in fact, around the world. Working together, appreciatively, aids everyone in the ecosystem to do better. As John O'Donohue says, "Beauty is not just a call to growth, it is a transforming presence wherein we unfold towards growth almost before we realize it. Our deepest self-knowledge unfolds as we are embraced by beauty." In the process, we make better products, we give better service, we feel better, and we learn to stay positive and stick with things while most of the world sinks into anger and antipathy.

Appreciation, I see clearly, appreciates steadily. The Dalai Lama drives home the magnitude of the point: "Although it might seem insignificant, when we multiply it by billions of others who might do the same thing, we can have an enormous impact." Listening to folks who study this stuff for a living, like psychologist Shawn Achor, it's shocking how quickly even small gratitude practices can shift someone's mental health in a matter of weeks. The reams of research that are readily available make me wonder again why every organization isn't already doing this sort of work. The cost (pretty much zero) compared to the benefits (really big!) make it clear (to me at least) that it would be crazy to pass this up. And when I hear him say that the biggest benefit comes from doing gratitude work in an organization that practices it collectively, I start to realize that anyone who starts a business would be smart to put regimens for regular appreciation in place right after they set up their financial statements.

Of course, it's hard to alter deeply-held beliefs. Even knowing all of what I've shared here, I still, in the back corner of my brain, doubt myself and worry secretly that maybe we're only a B-plus at doing business in this way, and that we need to do much better to earn that elusive A-plus that Anne Lamott and I were both taught to aspire to. I did laugh out loud again, after working on the beginnings of this piece, when I remembered that my grade point at U of M all those many years ago, was, you guessed it, a B-plus! And then those negative voices melt into the background when I hear stories like this one from Kasey Garant, who worked at Mail Order for the holiday again this year, shared:

I have never in my life worked for a company that takes such good care of their employees. I feel like I'm treated like an actual human being with compassion and kindness by everyone around me, and that is largely due to how much we express gratitude and appreciation towards one another. Whenever I've had a "Code Green" written about me, it has literally made me giddy. I was so happy, smiling ear to ear! Zingerman's culture has brought a new perspective on how your workplace should function. I feel like I'm seen as a person that has emotions and needs, and those needs are always met. It's clear that taking care of each other is a HUGE part of this work culture. There is no toxicity in sight. I was actually a bit worried during my training that this was going to be the kind of company that promotes "toxic positivity," but after working here for 2 weeks, it was clear that the idea was the farthest thing from the truth. What I do know is I absolutely love working here, and I'm incredibly grateful to have had this experience in my life.

In appreciation of the good energy that gratitude brings, Kasey's kind note inspires me to push harder to be more positive still. Which leads me to appreciate all of you!!

Forty years ago, on Monday morning, March 15, 1982, we formally opened the doors of Zingerman's Delicatessen for the very first time. We had two staff members, me and Paul, a bunch of good friends who were eager to help, and, maybe most importantly, we had a wonderfully caring, supportive community who was ready to welcome us in. All those years ago, in a time when interest rates and unemployment levels were incredibly high, when computers still took up whole buildings, when credit cards were barely beginning to gain traction, and half our customers still paid by check, it would have been impossible to imagine that we would still be here,

"I would maintain that thanks are the highest form of thought; and that gratitude is happiness doubled by wonder."

g.k. chesterton



working as we are, four decades down the road; that we would be a Community of Businesses, rooted even more deeply in the Ann Arbor area, committed more strongly than ever to contributing positively to the health of that community.

Anniversaries are but a passing moment in time. Still, they offer us an always welcome invitation to pause to appreciate everyone and everything around us. We are incredibly grateful to be here in such a welcoming and supportive community. We are deeply appreciative of the opportunity to work with so many committed, caring, and quality-focused colleagues. Every day we give things for the chance to work with amazing vendors. And we thank YOU—we have no doubt that we have some of the most compassionate and caring customers anywhere in the world. Whatever Zingerman's has contributed to the community over nearly forty years now, it has happened only because of the work of thousands of staff members who have been part of our organization, and the support of what must by now be millions of great customers, here in this community, around the country, and in fact, around the world. Thank you for making whatever we have done possible; thank you for caring about quality; thank you for your kindness, generosity, and encouragement. It's an honor to serve you.

If we stick with this work, I believe, great things are sure to follow. Yes, we all have many challenges in front of us, and these are clearly difficult and trying times. Still, I have learned to believe, when I begin to worry, the way I was raised to do, I take a deep breath, appreciate what I've learned over the years, reground myself in gratitude, remind myself that a B-plus is a pretty good grade, and go back to Fyodor Dostoevsky's statement from 150 years ago: "Beauty will save the world."

Four decades down the road from that first quiet Monday morning on which we opened up for the first time, we continue to learn and to grow, and to gently push to get better to go out and re-earn your trust every day. We hope to be here doing the same for many decades to come. Thank you all!

Ari

Ari Weinzweig,
Zingerman's Co-Founder

"gratitude turns what we have into enough, and more. it turns denial into acceptance, chaos into order, confusion into clarity...it makes sense of our past, brings peace for today, and creates a vision for tomorrow."

meLody beattie



A Conversation with Paul and Ari

As someone who has not just worked, but grown and thrived, in the Zingerman's Community of Businesses for nearly 25 years now, I'd like to personally invite you to read a conversation that's been decades in the making. March 15 marks the 40th anniversary of Zingerman's! We're reflecting on four special decades in the community and sharing how a place so meaningful to so many has evolved. The Conversation that follows gives an inside view into the original heart and soul of our organization, the duo simply known as Paul and Ari (or Ari and Paul, depending on who you ask).

For the task of conducting an interview with our dynamic co-founders, we called on a good friend of Zingerman's—Roadhouse fried chicken-lover and local author Micki Maynard. She also happens to be uniquely qualified for the role, given that she just wrote a book about us: *Satisfaction Guaranteed: How Zingerman's Built a Corner Deli into a Global Food Community*, from Charles Scribner's Sons, on sale now. Her conversation with our caring co-founders gives you a sense of their lifelong devotion to Ann Arbor, food, people, service, fun, and more food. That foundation is just one of the many reasons that I, and hundreds like me, have been compelled to stick around for so long and work together toward the future of Zingerman's.

Sara

Sara Hudson,
Zingerman's staffer

MICKI: What did you wish you knew when you founded the Deli in 1982? Was there any kind of preparation that might have made things easier?

PAUL: We knew nothing about finance. It would have been nice if we had some financial acumen when we opened. We knew about labor costs and food costs, to keep those low, but as far as all the rest of it, I didn't have any expertise—not at the level we needed to.

ARI: I think about all the self-management that I had no clue about. We've learned so much about things like visioning, Servant Leadership, Stewardship, Open-Book Management, Lean ... It's not like we know everything now—we have another bazillion years of learning in front of us.

MM: For people who aren't familiar with the Zingerman's story, tell us why you decided to stay grounded in Ann Arbor, rather than franchise the Deli and expand to different places.

PAUL: I tried to imagine a life I wanted to live, and then build a business that would allow that to happen. That life was not one that included being a member at a country club and having a giant house. It was less entrepreneur and more lifestyle. There was a desire to be kind of different and unique and go for something that was really great, and that was going to be a lot of fun to do.

I think it's hard for people to get their heads around that notion because very few people consider that they have enough. I think most people think there's more out there. And if you want more, you're never satisfied, because there's always more.

ARI: From the beginning the idea was only to have this one very special Deli, something that was true to Ann Arbor, and true to us, in the way that Paul was just talking about. There's something special about creating a business that's unique, one that's truly of the place that it's in. It becomes a destination in the best possible way. One day I was being interviewed by a writer who had asked me pretty much the same question as yours. We were sitting out front of the Deli, on the bench, and I looked up and there was a guy standing out in the middle of Detroit Street, taking a photo of his friends who were posing in front of the Deli. And I just looked at the reporter and I said, "That doesn't happen if there are 20 Zingerman's all over the country!"

MM: What has Ann Arbor meant to both of you?

PAUL: You have a world-class university, and folks from

all over the world are coming there. There was a market for the types of products that we wanted to put out there for sale. I don't know if it would have been successful anywhere else, and I don't know if by luck we picked the right corner of the universe to locate. There's something pretty special about Ann Arbor that I can't articulate. The University of Michigan has one of the largest alumni associations in the world. It creates some kind of loyalty among people who come and spend a few years there. You go all over the world and you're going to see the maize and blue t-shirts and hats, and folks keep coming back for football games.

We were fortunate to open the type of business we did in that type of town. It's a very small city but culturally it's pretty large. It's a comfortable place to live, now I think if you can afford it. We bought a home in 1977. I was making \$300 a week and able to afford a home in a pretty good neighborhood. You can't do that anymore. When we opened, we were able to open for almost no money at all. A \$20,000 loan, and Ari's grandmother put in \$2,000. The \$20,000 we borrowed was at 20 percent interest. You can't even begin to start the permitting process for that.

ARI: I grew up in Chicago, and I love cities, but I'm spoiled by living in Ann Arbor. It has 75-percent of the culture of a big city and 10-percent of the aggravation. There are so many interesting people here from around the world, people with very different backgrounds and different areas of expertise. And yet, there's a down-to-earth character to the place. I've waited on people with Nobel Prizes and Pulitzer Prizes—most of them, I had no clue who they were until many years after I started waiting on them. I just knew what they liked to eat!

MM: One especially memorable guest that I write about in my book is former President Barack Obama. What was it like when he visited?

PAUL: He was a very nice man, very down to earth. He came in, went behind the counter, and immediately asked people their names. Delightful, funny, and quick-witted. I was fortunate to meet him a couple of times. I got to meet Michelle, too, that was also nice. And when he came in and spoke at U of M, he spoke about his Reuben that he ate at the Deli. That was pretty special. Kind of surreal, in a way.

MM: You've said that you never expected the ZCoB to get as big as it now is. When did you realize that the enterprise was going to be sizable?

ARI: It didn't dawn on me until we had the conversation

about visioning in the summer of 1993. Paul sat me down on the bench one morning and asked me what I wanted to be doing ten years down the road. I had no idea, but his question evolved over a good year of conversation and ended up with us writing the six-page-long Zingerman's 2009 Vision. That was the first time we ever wrote one. The content of the vision—and learning the process of visioning—changed our lives.

PAUL: The Deli had gotten very complicated with a lot of different activities. We thought if we could have a managing partner, they could focus on it. We kind of imagined more cottage industries. It was the desire to provide ownership to folks that work for us. I certainly never imagined that there would be multi-million dollar businesses spinning out of it. It still seems somewhat unreal. The original vision was to reach \$20 million in the next 15 years. We shot past that early on. The idea wasn't to grow really large: the idea was to offer the opportunity for ownership in the organization.

MM: Mail Order is almost half of Zingerman's annual revenue now. Why do you think it has been so successful?

PAUL: One is the U of M Alumni Association. The alumni were our big target market. You're living in San Francisco and having bread shipped from Zingerman's because it meant something special to you as a student in Ann Arbor. At Mail Order, every order is a unique order. They do things that people said wouldn't work. Illustrations wouldn't work. Having a lot of catalog copy doesn't work. Picking to order doesn't work. But it worked for Mail Order. They're still there, growing.

ARI: What made it work in the beginning still makes it work, but it also took the work that co-managing partners Tom, Toni, and Mo put in to make it grow. The quality of the product, the fact that we believe in the stuff we sell.

MM: What has been the most enjoyable part? Are there some personal highlights for each of you?

PAUL: A young person comes to work for you, and initially, they might have trouble delivering a glass of water to the table, but they might end up managing a million-dollar department. They discover they have a love of food and a love of being a great service provider. Watching somebody grow, and get pushed beyond their own limitations to start to accomplish some significant things is pretty wonderful.

I also like the fact that we've had enough success that we can do things that sounded fun to do that most businesses wouldn't do, because it's not profitable. We started Food

and ari interviewed by Micheline Maynard

what are your favorite things on the menu?

paul:

I still enjoy a plain corned beef sandwich on rye bread with yellow mustard. I don't think I'll ever get tired of that. At the Roadhouse, I loved the corn dogs, though they aren't on the menu right now. I love hamantaschen and Parmesan Pepper Bread at the Bakehouse. At Miss Kim, the marvelous Street Style Tteokbokki!

ari:

The Country Miche and the handmade cream cheese from the Creamery. Chopped liver is right up there. We have so many great olive oils. The brands of pasta that we carry—Martelli, Rustichella, Gentile, Mancini. Parmigiano Reggiano cheese. The fried chicken at the Roadhouse. And the fish stew. The whole smoked chicken at the Roadhouse. Some amazing chocolates—the Zzang! candy bars are something special. Ginger Jump-Up cookies and farm-to-table Tellicherry pepper. The harissa and couscous from the Mahjoub family in Tunisia!

is there a business leader or a writer who has particularly inspired you?

paul:

Max DePree and Peter Block, and certainly Peter Drucker initially. *The Empowered Manager* by Peter Block I came across when I was learning how to manage managers. I was comfortable managing the front line. *The End of Bureaucracy & the Rise of the Intelligent Organization* was a roadmap for how we might be able to grow in a way that provided opportunities for others. *The Great Game of Business*. Viktor Frankl's *Man's Search for Meaning*.

ari:

Emma Goldman, Gustav Landauer, and Peter Koestenbaum, who was a good friend of Peter Block. Robert Greenleaf's books about Servant Leadership. Influence that Stas' Kazmierski brought around visioning and Bottom-Line Change, what Anese Cavanaugh taught us about energy management. Sam Keen's book on self-learning helped me a lot. Anne Lamott's books on writing. Brenda Ueland's *If You Really Want to Write* was a huge influence—it changed my life!

Gatherers from an idea, and in the beginning, it was entirely funded by the Deli. There are not many social service nonprofits that grow out of a for-profit retail store. To be able to make that commitment and stick with it since 1988 is pretty nice. We've brought in folks who are now owners of businesses, who didn't have the money. But if they were passionate, they got a chance to do it. That's a lot of fun.

ARI: I can't say everything is joyful but I try my best to find it everywhere. It's not just luck. Standing here right now at the Roadhouse, every single person I'm looking at is awesome. There's Lisa, who's been here 18 years and has gone from server to general manager, and will be a partner. We have amazing 16-year-olds coming to work and quizzing each other about what's on the menu. There's Amy at the Bakehouse, who started as a baker 30 years ago, and look at what she does now as a managing partner, a member of our Stewardship Council, and an author of a nationally-renowned book on baking. We're very fortunate to work with so many great people, to have so many wonderful customers and incredible artisan suppliers all over the world!

Don't leave the food out—there's so much amazing food here! That's the core of everything. If our food—and service—wasn't great, none of the rest of this would have worked. And the influence that what we teach through ZingTrain and the business books has had on people all

over the world. In the last week, I've emailed with folks in Bali, Uganda, and Costa Rica who are all benefiting from learning our approaches and adapting them to their own settings. That is a truly rewarding feeling.

MM: What have you learned since the beginning?

PAUL: I've certainly learned you don't have to have an educated palate to tell that something's really, really good, and better than a competitive product. If you can get someone to take a taste, they are going to understand the difference. Good food can be recognized by anybody. When we opened, customer service was all transactional, and it was things that happened after a sale. It was the return department. If you went to a bookstore back then, you wouldn't find a book about it, they'd have to order it and it would probably be an academic book. We taught people that they would pay for great service.

MM: And what has the pandemic taught you?

PAUL: People are stressed, they're worried about the future. It's even more important that we're not just selling food, we're calming people down. We're saying there's still some goodness in the world.

ARI: Mostly, I just learned that what we do works, and that healthier organizational ecosystems are more resilient, just like a healthy body is more resilient. People who are kind and collaborative and choosing positive

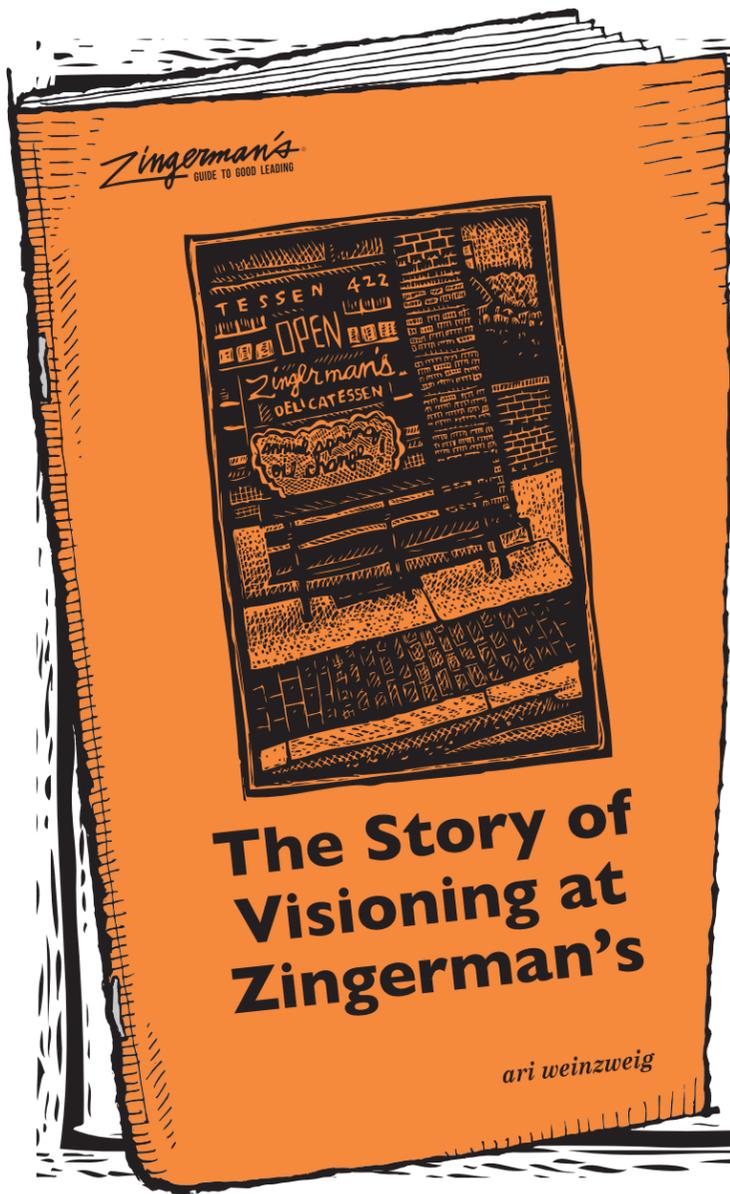
beliefs can do well. We decided early in the pandemic that however we could, we wanted to stay open, as a service to the community. I'm really glad we did. A woman in the Roadhouse celebrating her 64th birthday, she was almost crying, and thanking us.

It's also remarkable that we've managed this whole thing, the response to the pandemic, making decisions at the partner level, as we have for 40 years now, by consensus. That won't likely get much attention in articles, but it's remarkable evidence that consensus and collaboration can work in a crisis.

MM: Ten years from now, you will be celebrating 50 years of Zingerman's. What would you like this decade to bring?

PAUL: I would like to say we spent these years trying to figure out our succession transition plan and that we were able to come up with something that allowed us to share more and more with the people that work for us. And that we're still here.

ARI: I'd like to be able to say the pandemic was over. I hope the world is a more peaceful place and that dignity and kindness extend ever more widely. From a Zingerman's standpoint, I hope we're healthy, and that as Paul and I wind down our day-to-day involvement, the organization is just getting going.



coming soon!

new pamphlet from zingerman's press

The visioning process has been instrumental in helping to make the Zingerman's Community what it is. Without visioning, it's pretty safe to say Zingerman's would not be nearing its 40th anniversary! Without visioning, Ari would not still be here writing this newsletter. This pamphlet builds on a host of other pieces Ari has written on the subject. It includes a trio of new essays, along with the written versions of all of the various Zingerman's visions—the 1982 "vision," 2009, 2020, and our newest vision, Zingerman's 2032, which describes what our collective lives will be like when we are celebrating our 50th organizational anniversary!

Available online at zingermanspress.com or zingtrain.com, or in person at the Deli, Roadhouse, or Coffee Company

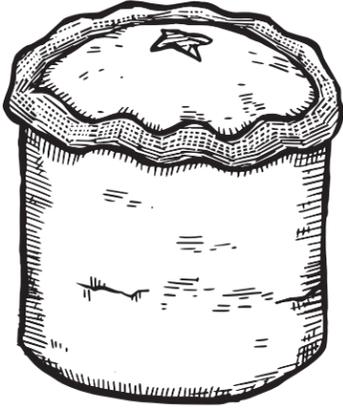
CORNMAN FARMS

est. **PIE & MASH** 1834

Inspired by the cooking of co-managing partner Kieron Hales' homeland, Zingerman's Cornman Farms will transform into a traditional English Pie & Mash shop in March! This hearty, age-old comfort food features a savory handmade pie with mashed potatoes, seasonal veggies, and Chef Kieron's creamy and indulgent Devon Fudge—a recipe from his hometown. We will be making a limited number of pies each week, so ordering ahead is encouraged to guarantee your pie!

March 9	Steak & Stilton
March 16	Chicken Tikka Masala
March 23	Beef & Onion
March 30	Bacon Devon

Order your pies today at shop.zingermanscornmanfarms.com

Zingerman's

party planning made easy

From teacher luncheons to graduation parties, birthdays to weddings, baby showers to family reunions, client appreciations to retirement parties, Zingerman's businesses have the culinary crews to help pull off an extraordinary event at one of their many venues, or at your own house—even virtually!

ZINGERMAN'S Cornman farms®

Host an event at this historic, 19th-century setting (named "Michigan's Barn of the Year") or have the Cornman Farms' team come to you. Chef Kieron Hales can even incorporate some of your most cherished family recipes into your event's menu.



Cheese platters for a small gathering or a crowd with your choice of dried fruits, nuts, cured meats, pickled veggies, sauces, and your choice of Zingerman's Bakehouse baguette or crackers.



Successfully catering memorable events takes range, and the Deli Catering crew is ready to handle an intimate gathering up to the largest of gatherings with everything from deli platters to on-site dinner service, and so much more.

≡ GREYLINE ≡ ZINGERMAN'S EVENT SPACE

A unique venue to host your staff party or family celebration, this historic, renovated Greyhound bus station in downtown Ann Arbor even has a hotel on-site for out-of-town guests.

MISS 쥘방 KIM.

Inside their intimate Kerrytown location, Chef Ji Hye Kim's menu approaches traditional Korean cuisine with a creative eye toward showcasing Michigan's seasonal produce and local farmers.

Zingerman's ROADHOUSE CATERING

Host a private party in the restaurant or have them bring all of the Roadhouse classics offsite, like fried chicken, pit-smoked barbecue, mac & cheese, and more really good American food.



Our in-house cake studio creates incredible works of delicious, edible art that could grace your table for weddings, birthdays, retirements, engagements, or any other occasions at which cake is called for.

start planning your party at
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Sending you heartfelt gratitude from the Zingerman's Community, 754 or so people strong!



thank you for 40 amazing years & pickle cheers for more to come!



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