# Audio file

[Numi Organic Tea Reem Hassani and Ahmed Rahim.mp3](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

# [Transcript](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:00:02 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[We brought on some investors that put a lot of pressure on us and when you're under pressure from the top down, from investors and we're not performing from the bottoms up, then you know you're in the hot seat of 20% growth wasn't enough, they wanted 304050. And then if we hit 30, that wasn't enough.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:00:22 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[So it was just a pressure of more performance and some of them are used to getting 10 times their money.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:00:33 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[From NPR, it's how I built this show about innovators, entrepreneurs, idealists and the stories behind the movements they built.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:00:46 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[I'm Guy Raz, and on the show today how a brother sister team took a childhood memory from Iraq and turned it into a flourishing beverage business. New me tea, one of the most popular premium tea brands in the country.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:01:05 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[T is the.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:01:06 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Second, most consumed drink on Earth after water and of all the countries in the world, Turkey holds the top spot. They drink the most tea, and surprisingly, given that so much tea comes from eastern and southern Asia, not a single country.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:01:23 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[From those areas lands in the top ten, and when it comes to the US, there is no doubt where Americans stand.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:01:31 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Each year they drink more coffee than soda, juice and tea combined. And unlike the rest of the world, about 80% of the tea consumed in the US is ice tea. But even though coffee is king in the US, the domestic tea market has grown from under.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:01:51 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[$2 billion in 1990 to more than $13 billion today, which is interesting because that time period aligns with two important trends in the food and beverage.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:02:04 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[History the 1st, 3rd Wave coffee scene that started in the late 1990s. Brands like INTELLIGENCIA and Chicago and Stump Town in Portland. The quality of their coffee elevated the experience for customers and inspired a whole new type of coffee shop. The second trend during that time.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:02:06](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Was the.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:02:24 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Was the movement towards organic fair trade, environmentally conscious sourcing in all things, food and beverage and customers started to understand that these things would cost more money to buy, which is how the premium tea market really started to gain traction in the US?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:02:44 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[When newly organic tea was launched in 1999 by Brother and Sister Ahmed Rahim and Reem Hassani, their prices were 5 or even 10 times higher than what people were used to paying for tea bags. But they knew that part of what they had to do was to educate consumers about the difference between.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:03:04 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[But they were offering and what you might find in a church basement potluck.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:03:09 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[New ET was going to be more expensive because it was premium tea, not just green and black tea leaves, but herbs and dried fruit peels and spices that were sourced from sustainable producers around the world. When Raymond Ahmed founded newbie, they were both going through transitional phases in their careers.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:03:29 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Ream was bouncing around, doing our job, substitute teaching language translation art.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:03:35 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Projects Ahmed had been spending about a decade in Europe living a bohemian lifestyle and tinkering with different entrepreneurial ventures. But both R.E.M. And Ahmed grew up with tea as part of their culture, especially a particular type called Noomi Basra. A tea made from dried limes that's popular.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:03:55 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[In Iraq and in the Gulf states.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:03:58 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Their parents immigrated to the US from Iraq in the early 1970s, when Rheem and Ahmed were kids, they settled in Cleveland, where both their parents established successful careers. Their dad was a doctor and their mom ended up as a home contractor and interior designer, but they still kept close ties to Iraq.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:04:18 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[And the relatives there.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:04:19 Speaker 3](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[We would go back every 3-4 years. So my mom was still very attached to her family there. She's we have big huge families there and we would.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:04:31 Speaker 3](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[You know, I remember the whole family would come to the airport and you're talking like 30 people coming to the airport to greet us. It was so amazing between my grandmothers and uncles and aunts and cousins. And then we would go to my grandmother's house where she'd have a huge feast and the whole all families.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:04:52 Speaker 3](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Both sides of the families would be there.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:04:54 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[For sure. Yeah. And I remember always playing with my cousins. Cause. Yeah, we have 30 plus Cousins, 1st cousins. They would always ask too, what's America like?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:05:05 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[I remember once when we went, I was probably 19 and I think we watched grease the movie like 20 times that summer cause you know, it was very new for them. Yeah. You know, and of course, anytime there's a scene where they're about to kiss, they cut the image before the kiss. And they started again after the kiss so you wouldn't even see.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:05:25 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Kisses on TV?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:05:27 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Did you were?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:05:28 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[You guys was being keeping Islamic traditions important at home when you were growing up.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:05:34 Speaker 3](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[My mother was religious, so she was, you know, practicing Muslim.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:05:39 Speaker 3](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Our dad became agnostic pretty much so he was more traditional than he was religious. I mean, we would celebrate aid every year, you know, with the big feast and the lamb. I always used to say that we lived in two worlds and our house was an Iraqi world and outside.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:06:00 Speaker 3](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[You know the American culture.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:06:02 Speaker 3](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[So inside it was kind of like a little Iraq. They only spoke to us in Arabic because they wanted us to learn the language. So when we were kids, they had an Arabic only policy. So if we spoke to them in English, they wouldn't answer us. And at the same time. So it was, you know, both, and they wanted us to do well in school. And they.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:06:22 Speaker 3](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Wanted to integrate with the culture and both had, you know, flourishing careers here in the United States. So we were surrounded by.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:06:31 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Do you remember when you when?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:06:33 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[You were a teenager.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:06:35 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Did you feel different? Did you feel like you know, you were sort of? Were you in a primarily white environment around, you know, sort of white Christian kids, or did you feel included?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:06:47 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Well, I was definitely picked on quite a lot as a young child. Last kid on the school bus, standing by the bus driver because people just wanted to pick fights with me because I was different, had a different name and dark skin.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:07:02 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[There was a lot of minorities in the public school I went to. There was a lot of African Americans.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:07:08 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[And then my parents sent me to a private Catholic school for two years, which I never understood, and unfortunately turned my attention to all kinds of substances to get through the being in a Catholic school, and I had to wear a tie and go to mass, which I never went to so.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:07:28 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Definitely a lot of non inclusion in a non equality growing up in Cleveland as an Iraqi kid.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:07:35 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[It sounds like you were going through a fair to say, a pretty rebellious stage. I mean, if you were kind of experimenting with drugs and and I after, I mean have to mention that.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:07:45 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Your parents probably weren't aware of that, I guess.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:07:48 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[At the time.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:07:49 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Well, I always say that psychedelics saved my life and it definitely gave me an awareness of what the bigger world is like. And my parents see how they finally found out when I was, I don't know, 13. And I was smoking marijuana and they didn't know what to do.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:08:04 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Because I was definitely the rubble of the four kids and.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:08:08 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[I kind of just did whatever I wanted and the psychedelic and drug world was kind of my outlet to just express and learn who I am.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:08:18 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Ahmed, you went to NYU to study psychology and theater.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:08:24 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[What was your?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:08:25 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Intention, did you? You. I know that you had done some photography in high school. Was that what you thought you wanted to become a photographer?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:08:32 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Well, you know, it was in the late 80s. I went without 100% knowing what I wanted to do and I had gotten a camera at my dad's old Nikon F2 camera and that became sort of my best friend. And I just photographed everything. And then as I was.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:08:52 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[In the art school, I went into photography and learned how to print and develop, and then that eventually led into filmmaking, which I continued to do in New York. And then I did that again in Paris and Prague. I went to film school, but I survived, mostly as a photographer to make a living.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:09:11 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[I I read reams that you really want to be an artist, but your mom said you're too smart for art and encourage you to study biomedical engineering, which is what you studied at college.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:09:22 Speaker 3](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Yeah, she wanted me to be a doctor, of course. And then I took art classes everywhere I could. And then art ended up saving my life.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:09:27 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Mm-hmm.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:09:32 Speaker 3](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[At some point, yeah.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:09:33 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[I guess something you went through a pretty traumatic experience in your third year of college. You got in a car accident that really seems to have had a kind of a big impact on the direction that your life took. Is that is it right? Is that right?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:09:47 Speaker 3](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Yes. So I was in a near fatal car accident when I was 20 and almost lost both my legs from the knee down and, you know, was vacuum lifted out of the site and then was in a trauma center 12 hours, saving both my legs and revascularization. My.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:10:08 Speaker 3](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Legs and relocating my knees and.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:10:11 Speaker 3](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Had to learn how to walk again or was in a wheelchair and cast for four months and ended up going back to school and leg braces. So I was in leg braces for another about nine months.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:10:24 Speaker 3](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[And between the age of 20 and 30, I think I had 15 surgeries on my legs.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:10:30 Speaker 3](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[And I should mention you were like a really good tennis player. Like you were an athlete. That was probably part of your identity. Yeah. Yeah. I was captain of my tennis team. Yeah. Tennis was definitely a huge part of my idea.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:10:46 Speaker 3](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Tennis and dance. And I remember that one of the doctors told me, he said, well, let's put it this way. You know, you're not going to be a ballet dancer. At one point, they thought, you know, it, that she might not walk again.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:10:58 Speaker 3](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[And I said, well, I'm going to play tennis and I'm going to dance kind of struggle to finish school at that point. Might have been post traumatic stress. And I I feel like I kind of imploded because, you know, my family wasn't really into therapy or anything. It was like in if you're going to a therapist or a shrink, that means that you're crazy.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:11:18 Speaker 3](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[So I had a really difficult 20s. Let's put it that way. I kept going downhill and got very depressed.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:11:24 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[You were kind of on this track to become a doctor or be a researcher, but you went back into the direction of art, which is sounds like that was your kind of your personal passion. How did that happen? How did you because you decided to go to art school? I guess in your in your.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:11:41 Speaker 3](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[20s, right, right. So I moved to Boston.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:11:45 Speaker 3](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[I got a job in research.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:11:47 Speaker 3](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[But I would forget what they would tell me, and so I would kind of always make mistakes and didn't really do a good job. And. And so I kind of got fired immediately. And I remember that that my boss had told me he said, you know, you should get an automated job.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:12:06 Speaker 3](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[I said, you know, I can go study art. So I was doing artwork, you know, on the side at that point because.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:12:12 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[What were you doing, by the way? Sculpture. Drawing, painting, painting.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:12:16 Speaker 3](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Yeah.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:12:17 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[All right, you go off to art school.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:12:20 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[And would eventually make your way back to the Bay Area where you now live. In. Meantime, Ahmed, you would you like kind of left? You left the US, you moved to Europe.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:12:29 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[What? What are you?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:12:30 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Doing so, a buddy of mine was living in Paris and said, hey, come visit me in Paris and you know when you go in Paris and spring, what do you do? You know, you fall in love and. And so I stayed in Paris and France for almost two years.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:12:47 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[And and then I was building my photography career and got into fashion photography and got into photojournalism. Then a buddy of mine in Paris invited me to go to Germany to do some work in the mountains there. So I left for Germany and and then I was leaving with a buddy in Germany.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:13:07 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[We bought an old RV at at gutted RV and we built a whole home out of it and we were on our way to go to Spain to go live in.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:13:14 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Pain and three days before I left, I met a guy from Czech Republic. He's like, oh, come stop by there. The food's really cheap. You can fill up your RV with food and a week in Prague turned into almost seven years and bought a farm there and.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:13:28 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Wow, you are. You are like a real nomad. I mean, in your 20s, right you were.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:13:33 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Just following your whatever your curiosity.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:13:36 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Yeah, there were no boundaries. There was, there was a lot of loneliness and and and unknown. But it was. These are the times to do it.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:13:45 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Did you have at that time? Do you remember having any anxiety about your future or any pressure from your parents in the sense?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:13:53 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Because.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:13:54 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Did you ever have any anxiety about, you know, whether you were kind of just drifting?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:13:59 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Ohh, absolutely every day I wanted some depression too because, you know, being in a place where you have just friends, no family and having a culture from ours where career and success is.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:14:14 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[You know, it's a big deal. And so yeah, it was it was. It kind of was my shadow. And it walked with me every day and reminded me.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:14:22 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[You know, what are you doing with your life? Are you going to make it as an artist? I was actually pretty successful photographer making pretty good money.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:14:30 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Were published in LA and then like other fashion journals I read.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:14:34 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Oh yeah, newspapers. I wasn't struggling financially like I was getting by and some, but I started losing the poetry and this sort of artistic style that I really grew up into photography doing black and white, abstract images, reflections, shadows, things that really.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:14:54 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Got me.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:14:55 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Excited. So it was at that moment that I said, you know what? I want to separate art from money and let's do something that just, you know, that allows me to make money. And then one day I'll come back to art and really give it my full attention and not to generate revenue or anything.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:15:15 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[I guess from from what I read, while you were in Prague, you got asked to build a a tea house. What's the what's the story?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:15:24 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[So.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:15:24 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[You know, Prague was an emerging place then in the early 1990s, it was just the wall had just been taken down in Germany. All the communism was kind of that whole part of the Eastern Europe, Berlin and Krakoff and Poland and Prague were just these booming cities where anything goes.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:15:30 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Yeah.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:15:44 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[And some friends that I played music with said, hey, there's these guys opening up a tea house and tea houses were are very common in Eastern Europe. They they're very influenced by Russia and Middle East and the whole tea culture, tea houses, you know, are where people go and spend.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:16:03 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Two hours for lunch and have meetings and very different. Not a fast-paced, no to go cups. So they had they they were looking for people to help and I was doing mosaics and tile work and all kinds of creative stuff with ceramics and and painting. So they asked if I would be involved in some way in helping design being.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:16:23 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Part of it. And then I started serving tea. And, you know, we'd serve hundreds of pots a day.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:16:29 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[This is just in in in this like a neighborhood in Prague or.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:16:31 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[In central Prague.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:16:32 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Old Town? Yeah, an Old Town right in the heart of.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:16:36 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Prague. So as I got really into the tea culture and I'd already gone to tea houses, you know, prior. But as I got into helping and working there, they asked me to be a partner. Then we opened up some more tea houses and then we ended up opening up a pretty big wholesale business of loose Tees, about 300 loose.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:16:56 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Things that we sold the tea houses through, a lot of Eastern Europe, but just learning the whole culture of tea. It it just, yeah, it it. It swept me away.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:17:04 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[And I have to assume that you are not getting rich off of this.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:17:08 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[No, photography was still my career and I was living on my farm most. I started an apartment in Prague, but it definitely was not paying the bills. I still had to to do photography, but you know my lifestyle wasn't very expensive.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:17:11 Speaker 3](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[OK, great.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:17:23 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Meantime, RIM you were you were living in the Bay Area. This is now in the late 90s. What were you doing professionally at that time?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:17:27 Speaker 3](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Yeah.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:17:32 Speaker 3](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[So I moved out here to get my masters in Fine Arts and I was working as a a substitute teacher and I had a really bad day at work one day.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:17:46 Speaker 3](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Children really difficult and I had to commute like an hour and a half for whenever to get there. So I was driving back. I was just crying and kind of like, you know, miserable. What am I doing?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:17:56 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[This isn't like 9798.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:17:58 Speaker 3](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[This is 97. Yeah, and two pieces of advice that had come to my head and one of them was my father, who had always told me. Just choose one thing when and master that thing didn't matter what it was. Just choose one thing.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:18:16 Speaker 3](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[And the other piece of advice was an old boyfriend who said, you know, just grind your teeth and do it so, you know, whatever, just overcome your fear.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:18:25 Speaker 3](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[And I had so many ideas of different, like different ideas of things that could be done, you know, business ideas, basically. And so one of them was this dry desert line that we drank as kids.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:18:37 Speaker 3](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[It's called needle thread and you know that we've always talked about in the family. Somebody should import this tea.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:18:43 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Tea made from lime.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:18:45 Speaker 3](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[From a dried line that comes from the deserts of the Middle East and I was like, OK, that's.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:18:50 Speaker 3](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[What I'm going to do and the.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:18:52 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Tea, I mean.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:18:53 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[We talked about tea, but because we all people think of tea leaves. But is it basically dried lime peel?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:18:59 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[The whole dried lime. Yeah. There's no tea in it.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:19:01 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[That's so it's it's there's no team. It's just whole dried limes steeped in water. That's how you.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:19:07 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Yeah, that's it. You just crush it and and right when you also use it in, in stews and cooking. It's used all throughout the Middle East, but for the tea it's just the whole line that's crushed and and it's got a very unique taste, very sour. But in traditional culture it's it's kind of you're adding the tea into sugar.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:19:27 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[You know you're putting sugar into the tea, so you're drinking this very sweet and sour blend and it's super delicious, hot or cold.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:19:34 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Alright, so you are in Prague and Ream you are in.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:19:37 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[In Oakland, did you, like, send your brother an e-mail or his 19? This is the late 90s, so e-mail is just kind of starting out. Or did you call him and say, hey, I have this idea, can you help me? Is that is that what you did or or?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:19:50 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Was it something?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:19:51 Speaker 3](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Else no. So we were on a family trip. My dad had a medical convention in.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:19:58 Speaker 3](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Away. And we all went. And we, I think it was in 97 or 9898. Yeah. And then we drove out to the Grand Canyon and, you know, we went on a walk and, you know, I said, I have this idea that I'm going to do this new.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:20:13 Speaker 3](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Saying and then Ahmed said, well, I'm going to do it too. He had the idea too. So it was a synchronous stick moment that we're both kind of merging this thought, this thought that came in from from the universe.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:20:27 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[And we we talked about it all the time in the family cause, you know, and we would gather, we would always drink this lime. So we'd always be like God. Why isn't this available? Why? Why doesn't anyone drink it? So tarim's point, I was trying to import it to my tea houses, so I was trying to work with my cousin who lived at the time.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:20:47 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Oh.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:20:48 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[On to figure out how to import it into Europe. So when Jim and I took this little walk in the grand.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:20:53 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Canyon.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:20:55 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[And we started talking about it. I was like, well, I'm trying to do that right now too. And and then we were like, well, let's just do it together. And then it was like, well, where are we going to do it? So she said, why don't you come to Oakland? I was like Oakland.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:21:08 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[I've never been there, so I was like Oakland, CA. I was like, well, if I come back to the United States, California is probably the place to.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:21:15 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Be so.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:21:16 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[You decide. Yeah, fine. After this trip, I'll come up to Oakland and hang out.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:21:21 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Yeah, kind of. It was like alright, because I was thinking of leaving Prague. To be honest, I was thinking of still going to Spain, which I'm still going to end up in Spain one day. So I was in a pivotal point of I needed to. I wanted to go somewhere and you know at the time, Bill Clinton was the president and I was like, huh, this guy seems pretty cool.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:21:42 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Smoke, but didn't inhale and all this other stuff was happen.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:21:44 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Running and it was just. I felt like this country at the time was a little bit of a place where I could come back and check it out, but I only thought I was going to come for six months, so I moved to Oakland and moved into reams's apt 600 square foot apartment in Oakland.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:21:54 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Right.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:21:59 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[And just to sort of clarify, the idea was like we drank this as kids in Iraq. People will love this. People don't know this tea in in the US that was your.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:22:08 Speaker 3](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Idea. Yes. So that was our just initial idea. So we kept calling it this new thing. We didn't have a name for the company at the time and we didn't know we're going to, you know, produce hundreds of teeth.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:22:19 Speaker 3](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[But yeah, we just said let's do this.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:22:25 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[When we come back in just a moment, how Ahmed and Reem used the Yellow Pages, their relatives, and that 600 square foot apartment to launch their business and how at their very first trade show they turned their booth into a big attraction. Stay with us. I'm Guy Raz, and you're listening.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:22:44 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[To how I built this.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:22:51 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

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[00:23:09 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

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[00:23:25](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Capitalism touches every part of our lives.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:23:28](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Capitalism is a giant force that I don't understand.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:23:32 Speaker 3](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[I feel that it's a very safe system.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:23:35](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[I am constantly here, losing my job.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:23:37 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[It is our biggest success and our biggest failure.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:23:40 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[On this special series from THROUGHLINE capitalism.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:23:43 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Listen now to the three line podcast from NPR.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:23:53 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Hey, welcome back to how I built this. I'm Guy Raz. So it's 1998. And Ahmed and Rheem have decided to launch a business inspired by the lion tea that they both remember from their childhoods. But at this stage, it's really just an idea.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:24:10 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Well.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:24:10 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[I don't think it was thought through, but I thought again I was coming helping me get this stuff situated, get grounded and when I came to Oakland, you know, we took me to the Berkeley Bowl and Rainbow Grocery, all these hip natural food stores, which I didn't really have in in Europe, they didn't really exist.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:24:28 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Just yet. So I was actually really blown away by the some of the offerings, especially back then Pete's coffee had a really nice loose tea collections. How was like, huh? And with my experience in the tea houses, I was also noticing that there was a big void of certain types of teas in the market here back then in 99, so.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:24:49 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Kind of just doing more of the research, but we then quickly decided within our first couple of months to do a trade show and we didn't even have a product or a brand.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:25:00 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[That so. But we're like, oh, well, let's just launch On this date, which was 6-7 months out or something. So it kind of gave us a timeline and an idea that we had to start creating product. But then what that product was, we were kind of evolving it as we went.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:25:18 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[All right, so you are now together in the apartment?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:25:21 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[And let's talk about did you like, sit down and write a business plan, did you?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:25:27 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[What was the first kind of step you you took?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:25:30 Speaker 3](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Well, we didn't run a business plan, did we? No, we we're trying to figure out the name. That was our first step and then we landed on new me and we just got our new me, new me and that we were going to spell it NEWME and then we were going to spell it.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:25:36 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[No business plan.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:25:50 Speaker 3](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[NOMI.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:25:52 Speaker 3](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[And then we finally landed on NU, MI.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:25:55 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[And you and I knew me, like from Arabic knew me.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:25:57 Speaker 3](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Yes. So next step was to do the artwork. So of course our our priorities were the artwork.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:26:04 Speaker 3](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Because I'm still.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:26:04 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Trying to figure out like what did you guys I know you were going to sell this tea. You're going to import it. But but then what?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:26:11 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Like, where are you going?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:26:12 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Because we're going to go to these stores, these like natural food stores and try to sell it.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:26:16 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[To them.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:26:17 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[We were going to do a trade show.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:26:20 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[That's it. It was like we gotta go to the trade somehow.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:26:21 Speaker 3](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[We had no idea.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:26:24 Speaker 3](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[No, no, somebody.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:26:25 Speaker 3](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Told us you should do a trade show.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:26:27 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[But what was the what?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:26:28 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Was the product going to be? Was it just going to be loose tea that you were selling in bulk? Was it going to be?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:26:31 Speaker 3](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Oh.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:26:32 Speaker 3](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Were you going to put it in bags? Yeah. So I think at one point, Ahmed was feeling like it's sacrilegious to put tea into tea bags. But I said, you know, people only drink tea out of tea bags. So we have to sell tea and tea bags.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:26:46 Speaker 3](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[But he said, well, we have to put a full leaf quality tea in that tea bag. So before he came, I opened up the Yellow Pages. Yeah. Believe it or not, there Yellow Pages at the time. And I went through every packaging company that was in the Yellow Pages learning about the machines that package Tees. So we at one point.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:26:55 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Yeah.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:27:06 Speaker 3](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[I don't know how we got his name, but we stumbled upon the person who ended up being a Co Packer for 10-15 years. They were based in.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:27:14 Speaker 3](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Leanness and had like a 2 hour conversation with him. He was so friendly, you know, and of course it was. And now, like, amazed that he spent that much time talking to me and then talking to him later. Because, you know, there had to be minimum runs. So we learned about minimum runs we learned about.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:27:31 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[But what did you say then? Did you say, hey, we're bringing in tea. We want you to put it in tea bags for us. And then 10 tea bags into a box for us. It was like, was it that big?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:27:41 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Cool.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:27:42 Speaker 3](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Well, pretty much. I mean he I think he maybe did more of the talking and I did the note taking because he would. He explained how many bags per minute get, you know, put in you know that we have to buy the tax from somewhere, we buy the wrappers from somewhere and everything gets shipped to his facility. But we also asked him like.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:28:01 Speaker 3](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[How do we know if it's legal? What teas we put in the bags? Then Ahmed has the conversation with the FDA because we wanted to make sure everything we were doing was, you know, legal.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:28:14 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[And when you say you talked to the FDA, did you just like pick up a phone and and call the?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:28:19 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[FDA.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:28:20 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Well, that's the thing. The FDA told me that nobody calls us, we call you. But I got to know one of the FDA guys because as we mentioned, we were learning about the different nuances of what you do in packaging and how you get it packaged.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:28:34 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[And.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:28:34 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Yeah.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:28:34 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[I would just call and either leave messages or there was a couple of times I actually received the same person and then he finally said to me like, you know, people don't really call us.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:28:45 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[To ask us what you can do and what you can't do on your packaging and what in green, so I even said to him I said do you mean like you can put anything in a product and sell it and it's only until you call the person that they have to stop and he's like basically. Yeah. And I was like, wow, that that's a pretty free market.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:29:06 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[And then maybe and I changed places too with Co Packers, I remember I used to call people for packaging and I'd say I from new me.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:29:13 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[And they would call me back. They would give me all the attention in the world. I'd be like, wow, they're really helping a tiny little start up and then later on, I realized they thought we were new me, the new United Motors Inc Company, which is now Tesla. So back then, they had a warehouse in, in a facility to make cars in Fremont. And I was amazed on how people were.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:29:34 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Buying us back so.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:29:35 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Quickly and presumably because you had worked in the tea business in Prague, you already had a connection to suppliers.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:29:42 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Some, yeah, some. But some we didn't because in Europe we would buy sometimes from middle men like in Germany. So like with some of the herbs we wanted to bring that I noticed wasn't here in the US like Roy Bush and Honeybush with South Africa or the Mini mini Lime in Middle East. I had to find new suppliers and even the.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:30:04 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Green teas because of our.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:30:06 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Our focus on certain quality and and sustainable organic fair trade didn't really exist then yet, but I started searching for new suppliers.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:30:15 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[So initially you thought we're going to of course going to sell, assume you had to sell new meat tea you had.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:30:20 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[To.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:30:20 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Actually and and did you? Were you able to source those from Iraq or could you?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:30:26 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Find another place to get them.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:30:28 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[From.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:30:29 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Well, at the time my cousin was living in Oman and Oman is generally speaking where the the lime is kind of well known to come from. So he helped me source it and arrange the containers and all the.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:30:37 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Right.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:30:43 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Legal business work to get it to the port and on a container to get here.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:30:48 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Because that was going to be your I have to.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:30:50 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Assume your flagship flavor, right?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:30:53 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Yeah, that's our namesake and our our flagship, even though it still doesn't perform that well 20 years later, we we would never get rid of it.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:31:02 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[So the idea initially was to have how many different?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:31:05 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Would you say flavors of tea or or types of?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:31:07 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Tea. Yeah. And in that process of seeing what the market, what was available and what wasn't available because we we kind of really wanted to take more of an innovative approach, we decided to do 2 black teas, 2 green teas and.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:31:25 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[5 herbals.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:31:26 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[The line being one of them, and we've also decided to just do 1 ingredient in all of the flavors, right? So the black teas were single flavors. The green teas were single flavors, the herbs were just one herb, you know lemongrass, mint, roebucks, honeybush, lime, nothing else. Because I had noticed that the.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:31:35](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Hey.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:31:47 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Market was just saturated with all kinds of flavorings and and blends that you really wouldn't taste the herbs or let nature speak for itself.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:31:56 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[So we just stuck with those nine and then the Numis collection, which was an assorted box of all nine flavors.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:32:03 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[I remember I interviewed Todd Carmichael and JP Alberti, founders of La Colombe, and we talked a lot about the flavor profiles that they were looking for when they were trying to create the right blends of coffee. And were you doing that? Were you just, like, drinking a lot of tea and just swishing it around your mouth and?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:32:23 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Kind of trying to find.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:32:24 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Right balance.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:32:26 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Yeah, TI think. Well, maybe coffee lovers won't like this, but I think tea is more nuanced and hundreds of more, if not thousands of more varieties of taste than coffee. But I think for me it was about where we differentiating ourselves.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:32:45 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Because I had done tons of copings in in Europe and the tea houses, and we weren't really starting with a lot of blends, we were starting with straight ingredients. Just one ingredient blend. So it was who's creating the most nuanced full flavor. And then it was a lot about the leaf size with the Co Packer we had.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:33:05 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[We had to really do a lot of trials and tribulations to make sure the machine can adapt to a larger lot leaf tea size because most tea bags were like dust, so we really wanted to revolutionize putting a whole leaf in a tea bag at the time. And so yes, it was tasting all the time, making sure the quality was premium.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:33:25 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[And we didn't add any oils or flavorings. We just wanted the pure tea, so we wouldn't, you know, adulterate it with anything.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:33:33 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[So this is in in 1999, you haven't launched yet and this I think is sort of the.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:33:39 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[The beginning of what would eventually be known as the third wave of coffee, right, like you had Starbucks, which was the second wave and then now you had like.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:33:49 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[La Colombe and Stumptown and and coffee was what people were excited about in the late 90s. Coffee was just going crazy. The people coming to you and saying you guys might want to think about.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:34:02 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Coffee.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:34:03 Speaker 3](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[No, I mean, I would say that we kept pitching the idea that what's happening to coffee is going to happen to tea, so that connoisseurship and kind of the gourmet ship of if you that's a word of coffee is going to happen to tea. So we're just going to ride that wave.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:34:18 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Yeah.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:34:20](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Yeah.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:34:23 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Yeah, you, you, you are starting to kind of build out the infrastructure of what to do and before you launched was the idea to mainly go directly to grocery stores and to have them sell your tea on the shelves or to work with restaurants?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:34:23](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[So.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:34:40 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Or both. How did you think of your distribution model initially?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:34:45 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[You know, when I look back on it, I don't think we even knew where the distribution of the product was going to go. Sure, we we love the natural food stores and we knew coffee shops would be great. But how are we going to get there? Is it all just shipped via, you know, the UPS FedEx system or is it distributors?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:35:05 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[It was. Let's just find out as we.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:35:08 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Go so.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:35:09 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Before you launched, I have to assume you you had to import tea where you just like put. There's boxes of of tea stacked in your apartment ring.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:35:19 Speaker 3](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Well, we, you know, I think we had an import broker that helped us get all the teas in and then the loose teas went to the Co Packer to pack. Then we brought all of that to my kitchen and kitchen and living room basically became the warehouse. So we would, you know, we would pack all the orders.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:35:40 Speaker 3](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Get them all out of my small Toyota Corolla and kind of assembly line them into the kitchen and and then we would take turns packing, packing and shipping. And you, you had to have some money to import the teas and to.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:35:54 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Work with the Co Packer.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:35:55 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[And really, I can't imagine you had a whole lot of money, you know, at the time you're in your 30s and early 30s and and kind of doing different jobs here and there. And and Ahmed, you had some success running a, you know, being a partner at a company, but you by no means were you wealthy or, you know, did you have lots of money? How did you finance?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:36:15 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[The business at the beginning.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:36:17 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[So we we went to our dad and asked him if he would use the leverage of his house.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:36:26 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[To get a loan. So we partnered with the Bank in Cleveland and he refinanced his home, and he had a line of credit on his home up to X amount. But we just started with a $250,000 line of credit and.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:36:45 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Wow, did money go fast then? Wow.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:36:47 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[That's a I mean were.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:36:49 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[You guys nervous about that?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:36:51 Speaker 3](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[$250,000 line of credit. You know that's going to be paid back at some point. Did that cause any anxiety for either of you? Yes. I mean, our parents are extremely generous and they really believed in us. So they, you know, they didn't put pressure to pay it back.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:37:10 Speaker 3](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[But we always kind of had it in the back of our mind and our dad kind of billed us out on several occasions because summers were really tight. T season is until the fall and you have to buy all your teas in the summer.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:37:23 Speaker 3](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[So he would bail us out with his pension plan, you know, so it was just felt like, you know, our father was really.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:37:29 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Yeah.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:37:31 Speaker 3](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Really, really there for us.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:37:34 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[So alright, so it's you finally get to launch the moment of launch and I guess in 1999 the way to go was to go to a trade show and that's from what I understand that's how you guys.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:37:45 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Kind of.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:37:45 Speaker 3](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Launched, right? Yeah. Wasn't. It's the gift show.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:37:46 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Yep, we launched that in San Francisco. Thank you, Sir.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:37:51 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[And tell me what you set up a like. A little booth there and put your keys out there. And I imagine you didn't have a whole lot of money to bring an architect that you guys built this yourself.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:38:00 Speaker 3](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Right. The booth. Well, we built the displays and then we would rent the tables and then we would create tablecloths, all that kind.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:38:07 Speaker 3](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Of stuff, yeah.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:38:08 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[But it wasn't like a card table with some tea on top like you guys put a lot of effort into the.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:38:13 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[The look of this booth.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:38:15 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Oh yeah, that was a total.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:38:15 Speaker 3](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Yes, three days, three days of work to.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:38:18 Speaker 3](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Get it up.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:38:18 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[And our booth was just an art display. That room and I would hand sew and well, she would sew. I would hang up tea, stained fabrics. And, you know, all this stuff we were doing. So it was basically you're going. It was like you were passing by a gallery. Wasn't even like, a business booth. It was a gallery. The booth was definitely a showstopper.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:38:31 Speaker 3](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Any banners?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:38:37 Speaker 3](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Yeah.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:38:40 Speaker 3](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[And how do people react when they when they walk by? Well, we had a major passion, major passion problem, because anytime somebody would come into the booth, we would have to walk them through. Like all those things that they'd have to smell the tea and then see the liquid and then drink it. Of course. And, you know, I think we.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:39:01 Speaker 3](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[All along, I think our our life and our career we've had this, this streak of hospitality of Arab hospitality in us. So everybody became welcome into the booth. And, you know, it's just a sort of a tea.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:39:16 Speaker 3](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Just inundating them with all of our teams, not to necessarily sell product, but to to share in it. So you know, is it a little bit of a different twist on on on on the sales technique?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:39:29 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[But luckily you know, not knowing really what we were doing, we didn't even have like order forms. We we had to create them the first night after the show. Like, oh, we have people want to take orders.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:39:40 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[And we got to create an order sheet and I got schooled the first day by a gentleman who runs the Spice Company on margins and how to price it. So that first night after church, I had to change pricing because I realized, oh, we're we're not charging enough. So. But, you know, to our luck everyone was like you guys are going to be.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:40:00 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[A huge success.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:40:03 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[I mean and then the Rainbow Grocery buyer and Neiman Marcus and Dean and DeLuca and all.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:40:09 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Just passing by you in this trade show.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:40:12 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Yeah, so all these retailers would come by and they would just stop and we had people piled back wondering who's this movie? What's this business? What are they even selling? I remember the Rainbow Grocery buyer, Kevin. He stood there for like, 20 minutes. And I was like, oh, my God, I love your store.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:40:30 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[And he's like, what are you gonna do? And then, you know, once he got it, he was like, oh, my God, I want every one case of everything in my store. That's him with Dean and.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:40:38 Speaker 3](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Yeah. And then and then Dean DeLuca left us a voicemail on our answering machine at the time. And when I listened to it, I.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:40:39 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[DeLuca.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:40:47 Speaker 3](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Was like this is Damon Deluke.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:40:50 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[No idea who didn't look quite.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:40:52 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[It's such a big deal. What's this? I mean now, of course, this is not uncommon, right? But in 1999, was it unusual to see, like, whole leaf tea? And in the US?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:41:05 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Yeah, very unusual. That's why.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:41:08 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[You know, and I would go to Peet's coffee and see their loose leaf collection. I was totally blown away because that was probably the only place at the time that you can get a premium quality tea and the grocery stores at the time when we launched.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:41:18 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Yeah.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:41:22 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Only had very low grade tea backs, oil flavored and non organic. Yeah, it was just there was nothing premium on the shelf.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:41:34 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[How did you guys do at that trade show?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:41:36 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Be great. The gift show was a huge success. I mean, we got accounts we saw in today, 20 years later, and chains and.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:41:45 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Do you remember how much you get you guys made in orders?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:41:48 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[I would say over 100,000 when we look at some of the chains that we got in like Sur La Table and Neiman Marcus and cost plus and Rainbow, I would say over 100,000 for that year.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:41:59 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[And that's where you were basically selling your teas in the in the first sort?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:42:03 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Of year first few years.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:42:04 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[That right?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:42:05 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Yeah, food service got fairly popular quickly.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:42:09 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Food service. Meaning restaurants. OK, yeah.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:42:10 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Cafes and restaurants, hotels Ritz Carlton and Fairmont Hotels, and all the fancy places and department stores so that that would be specialty. But food service picked up really quick. That was actually the majority of our business in our first year and a half to two years.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:42:28 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[And in that first year you, you launched Starbucks bought Tazo tea and started to sell tazo at.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:42:35 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Starbucks locations did that turn out to be a good thing for you or a bad thing for? Was it, like, all rising tides? You know, floats all all boats or?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:42:44 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Was it a problem?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:42:46 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[It was actually a great opportunity for us because coffee roasters and the food service didn't want to support necessarily Starbucks, so they wanted who's the new kid on the block and knew was a great fit. So we actually were able to take advantage of that opportunity.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:43:04 Speaker 3](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Hmm.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:43:05 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[People were ordering from you because they didn't want to.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:43:07 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[That's a, quote UN quote, corporate Starbucks brand. Yeah. And you guys were seeing this kind of.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:43:12 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[The scrappy startup.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:43:15 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Yeah, just a new innovative brand, privately held brother, sister and it was already gaining a lot of traction and getting a lot of press. So it was eyes were turning on us when but when that business sold.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:43:30 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[How much work did you guys have to do in educating consumers?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:43:35 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[About how to drink tea.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:43:37 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Was that hard or was it already being done because other people in the industry had already been doing that?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:43:44](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Work.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:43:44 Speaker 3](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Well, I think that it was because it was in a tea bag. You know, there wasn't any educational component, but we often got, you know, comments consumer comments that the tea wasn't strong enough or because people were used to tasting these really strong perfumes. So we had to constantly remind.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:44:04 Speaker 3](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Still, remind people that you're tasting the real tea, that it's more nuanced, that there's no flavorings in it, that there's just the real fruits, flowers and spices.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:44:13 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Most people are drinking tea.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:44:16 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Are flavored with with oils.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:44:18 Speaker 3](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Yeah. And then they'll add milk and sugar and.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:44:20 Speaker 3](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[All kinds of stuff.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:44:21 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[And your teas are just flowers and herbs and leaves.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:44:25 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Spices. Yeah. And then the other thing we had to educate was the whole leaf quality because people were used to tea bags that are just tea, dust and fannings that grow bitter really quickly. You know, if you leave a tea bag in for more than a minute, it'll start getting a string.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:44:39](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Right.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:44:41 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Where we would tell people no, you don't need to take it out in 30 seconds. You leave it in for 5-7 minutes. You can leave it in for an hour. It's not going to get better. It gets better. And that was a big education.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:44:53 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[And in the United States has to be one of the few countries on earth where people, maybe Canada people, drink tea directly in a mug. They put the bag into a mug, right? Because in imagine most everywhere else around the world.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:45:07 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[It's in the pot.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:45:08 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Well, it's set to go culture. So you want something that you can take with you?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:45:13 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Where a lot of places they'll actually sit. And obviously in this time where everything is on the run. Yeah, the ceremony of tea, you can still find if you go to China and Taiwan and Japan. Yeah, I think we've lost that here. I I've heard in the US there used to be a ton of tea houses before the Boston Tea Party.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:45:33 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[And and all the taxation. And then it switched to coffee, but unfortunately now it's yeah, it's it's a mug. It's to go to at your desk not the ceremony or the ritual of of making a pot and really.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:45:46 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Trying it.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:45:47 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[All right. So you guys start to really get traction very quickly and you had to presumably start to hire people.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:45:54 Speaker 3](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[I mean the first couple of years we were pretty scrappy. We just had an eye and then we had a family friend who who helped us with putting in orders in and we had our family members help us at trade shows. But then we started hiring people. So I think, you know, we hired a salesperson to help with sales.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:46:14 Speaker 3](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Hired, you know, office person. So somebody in the warehouse. So I think by our third or fourth year, we mainly had four or five people.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:46:24 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[So OK, so.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:46:25 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[From what I understand, right as early as like 3 or 4 years into the business, you guys were actually approached by other food companies who I guess were interested in acquiring you and and and one of them was Haines Celestial, which is I think today is like one of the biggest natural food companies in the US and sort of like like.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:46:44 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[An 800 LB gorilla and this is the company that that owned celestial tea, right?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:46:50 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Yeah, they own slice the seasonings and and 4050 other amazing natural food.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:46:54 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Brands, yeah.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:46:56 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[And and you know Team was definitely creating a buzz tea was it was happening. She's the most consumed beverage in the world and and everybody knows it and then the hand celestial. Yeah. We had met with them the gentleman who who was running it then at a trade show and and then.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:47:00 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Yeah.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:47:16 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Hey, give us a call.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:47:18 Speaker 3](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[What happened? Well, first he came by our booth with a couple of other, you know, execs or something. And I didn't see their badge. But he said, you know, you what you and your brother are doing is really interesting. We should talk some.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:47:32 Speaker 3](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Time and I was like, talk about what?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:47:37 Speaker 3](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[And then, little by little, I started looking at his badge, and I was like, Oh my gosh, CEO of Hands question. Anyway, he said we'll come by my booth, you know? So he was kind of brash and and they're not very personable.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:47:52 Speaker 3](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Let's put it that way. Yeah. And so then I told her I was like, oh, my God, that's CEO means, like, she wants us to come by his booth. So we went to his book.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:48:01 Speaker 3](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[And he did not make eye contact with us once.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:48:07 Speaker 3](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[And he was just busy with, I don't know. He had like a Walmart buyer or something in his booth. So we weren't to keen on the relationship. Let's put it that way because for us, it's all about, you know, human relationship and interaction. But anyway and then. But we, you know, we we decided to go forward and pursue it.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:48:28 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Pursue a conversation about a potential acquisition. Yeah, but there must have been just position. It must have been kind of exciting. I mean, just four years in and.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:48:37 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Because I have to assume up until this point you you guys were doing well, you know, right. I think you you two $3,000,000 in revenue a year, but you probably still weren't paying yourselves that that much.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:48:51 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Yeah, we were already probably north of four and a half million by year 4 and we were probably taking 2 to 3000 a month of salary. So we were definitely not paying ourselves, you know, I mean that's I think our first year were 1000 a month and it went to 2000. Then it went to 3000.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:49:01 Speaker 3](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[MHM.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:49:11 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[So.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:49:11 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Yeah, we weren't rolling in, sleeping in cash and.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:49:14 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[So, so hand Celestial comes around with a potential acquisition offer. I mean, I have to assume that that was kind of exciting.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:49:22 Speaker 3](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[It was very exciting. Yeah. I mean, we were kind of, you know, trepidatious. We were like, excited. I mean, when we first launched, I remember I thought, OK, we're going to do this for like 4 or five years, and I'm going to retire and just be an artist. So we both had that ambition. Yet at the same time, you know, we were having a lot of fun.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:49:41 Speaker 3](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[And we were, you know, growing the business, there was a lot of opportunities.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:49:45 Speaker 3](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[But then of course, we had a lot of financial strain at the same time and we were in the summer tea seasons in the fall, and you're always our cash is super tight.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:49:56 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[It's in the fall because.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:49:57 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Most people drink it hot, yes.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:49:59 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Yeah. Yeah, it's yeah. Yeah, it gets cold. And the the two season is usually from, like, October to March.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:50:01 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[And the falls chillier or?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:50:08 Speaker 3](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[And the summers were really tough because you have to buy all your tea, you know in June because it takes three months, buy it, pack it.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:50:17 Speaker 3](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[And then sell it by the fall. So those were our toughest ones when cash your cash needs high, but your your cash flow is.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:50:25 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Low. So so hands Celestial starts to kind of talk to you. And do they eventually make an offer a A firm offer?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:50:33 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Yeah, they did make a hard offer, Raymond. I had to go into the van because we had no privacy in our office, so her and I had to go sit in the minivan.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:50:43 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[In the back of it to kind of listen to what the offer was and.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:50:47 Speaker 3](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[One point he said you have till the end of the day to make a decision, remember.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:50:53 Speaker 3](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[I was like, who the hell are you to put like our back against the wall? Make make a decision by the end of the day.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:51:00 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[When we come back in just a moment, what Reem and Ahmed decided to do at the end of that day and why, even though new MITI was growing, it didn't feel like it was growing big enough or fast enough.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:51:13 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Stay with us. I'm Guy Raz, and you're listening to how I built this.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:51:26 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

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[00:51:42 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

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[00:52:04 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Hey, welcome back to how I built this. I'm Guy Raz. So it's the early 2000s. Hain Celestial has just made an offer to buy new Me tea, and they've given RIM and Ahmed a single day to respond.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:52:19 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[And I've had, from what I understand, you were already doing 4 million in revenue at that point, right? Yeah. And they were offering you between 6:00 and 8,000,000 bucks to buy to buy everything. Your intellectual property, your branding.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:52:31 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Your business.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:52:32 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Yeah, I you know, I was pretty clear at the time that there's no way that for the offer we were growing at 67% a year at the time, you know. And when that next year from 4 million to 7 million, then 7 million to 10 million and let's say we're doing 4 then and they offered US 8. We knew we were going to do that.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:52:41 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Yeah.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:52:52 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Within 12 to 18 months. So we kind of said.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:52:54 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[No way. So obviously you you set this as a lowball offer.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:52:57 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Yeah. And I think because we were a threat because we were emerging so fast, we were.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:53:03 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[At shelf 160% and our business, we knew we were going to probably double it the next year, which we almost did for us, it was pretty obvious that they felt threatened, but also at the same time they were intrigued and they liked our brand, but we weren't sure what was ever what would the destiny of the brand would be and we.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:53:22 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[It was too near to us to let go. We just loved it too much and it was we were having a lot.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:53:27 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Of fun in those years.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:53:28 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[So even though even though you had, because $4 million sounds like a lot of.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:53:33 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Money. But you need to pay for the Co Packers and the product and the distribution and your employees. And but you get an 88 million dollar offer. Would that have kind of at the time solved your financial challenges?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:53:48 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Yeah, for sure. I mean, we didn't have that much debt. We didn't have a bank loan. We just had this working line capital.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:53:56 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[From the bank on our dad's house, which by then increased to almost $1,000,000 now we were really beholden to this, you know, loan and making sure we can pay it back one day. So it would have taken out our debt and would have given us, you know, each a few $1,000,000. But that wasn't what we were we were about and that wasn't the least.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:54:16 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[For me, I wasn't thinking. That's why I'm in this. I'm in this for a different journey.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:54:21 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[All right, so you walk away from this offer, but you.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:54:26](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[You.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:54:27 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Your cash, you've got cash flow challenges.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:54:30 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Yeah, I mean, there was some payroll Fridays that would just literally lay on my back on the floor of the office.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:54:36 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[And wonder how are we gonna make payroll? The business was wasn't profitable every quarter, every month. So there'd be some months we would spend more because we would go market at trade shows or reduce promotions with retailers and then it gets, you know, compounded by then having slow summer months.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:54:57 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[So we're going to lose cash. We're not going to be profitable.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:55:00 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Was that stressful for the two of you to be running a business that was?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:55:06 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Not profitable. Sometimes you know when you're building momentum and building success. You know you're going to get through it even if you're not profitable. And other times when you don't see where the and the light is at the.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:55:20 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[End of the.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:55:20 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Tunnel, then? Yeah. I just ended up on my back staring up at the ceiling, wondering.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:55:26 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[What's going to happen?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:55:27 Speaker 3](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Then we got we.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:55:28 Speaker 3](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Also got investors too. Maybe a year after that.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:55:32 Speaker 3](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Outside investor, well, we met this fellow at a trade show, another trade show, and he came to our booth and.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:55:42 Speaker 3](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[He was Indian. I thought he was, you know, he was a tea supplier and then it turned out he's huge fashion mogul, family industry, created Tommy Hilfiger clothing and loved our staff, had read our press binder.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:56:02 Speaker 3](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[And he flew out to see us, and we went to dinner and he said, you know, I'll sign on this napkin. And we had a wonderful dinner and conversation. And he felt like a brother and.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:56:15 Speaker 3](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[He invested in us, so just got lucky.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:56:20 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[What about the?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:56:21 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[As you guys grew and had to kind of deal with the challenges of of growth, what about the relationship between the two of you? Was it pretty clear what what each of you did and was that did that help you guys?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:56:34 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Kind of have a easy smooth relationship.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:56:37 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Or was there?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:56:38 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Ever any tension between the two of.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:56:40 Speaker 3](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[You. Well, I think in terms of rules, it became more and more clear.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:56:45 Speaker 3](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[You know what our strengths were? It was a lot of difficult times where we argued and fought and.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:56:46 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Yeah.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:56:52 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[About about what? About what?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:56:54 Speaker 3](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Do some business decisions, but most of the business decisions we were on the same page with it was more just the personal interaction. So I may stepped on his foot on something he may I may he may have stepped on my foot on something.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:57:09 Speaker 3](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[There's maybe issues with different employees.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:57:13 Speaker 3](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[I would say things like that.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:57:15 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[So I think for me, when I look at some of the times that Wayne and I were in challenges as brother and sister were some of the times that we were most tried financially and that would bring the worst out of me and and my lack of ability to just be present to us as siblings and to the business.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:57:35 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Because you were worried that that the money would run.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:57:37 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Out or yeah, I mean I I've learned to listen better and give space to allow the discussion to flow and not what I think is right. And I think that's where I I missed the boat in days of stress and and pressure is it was just.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:57:55 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Let's get things done. Let's do it. Now. These are timelines, deadlines.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:57:59 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[And it just it was a normal reaction. I mean, we humans are. We're designed to survive. Yeah. Right. And when you feel like you, you're you're not going to.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:58:08 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Most of us freak out.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:58:11 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Yeah. And then we brought on some investors that put a lot of pressure on us. And if we didn't perform then you know, the management of people got tricky and not easy. And and I've learned over the years that that's not what I enjoy doing is managing people on a day-to-day basis.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:58:27 Speaker 3](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Mm-hmm.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:58:28 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Very hard. It's very hard. And and when you're under pressure from the top down from investors and we're not performing from the bottoms up, then you know you're in the hot seat of 20% growth wasn't enough, they wanted 304050. And then if we hit 30, that was.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:58:44 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Enough so it was just a pressure of more performance than some of them are used to getting 10 times their money.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:58:51 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[The meantime was that was that even possible to grow thirty 4050% a year?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:58:57 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Then.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:58:57 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[There were years we were growing 40 sixty 70%, but at this time as we were maturing a little bit and we were probably north of 20 million fifteen, 20 million those kind of growth became a lot more challenging.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:59:10 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[And that well, there was the 2009.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:59:12 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[And recession where we, you know, we had a couple flat years because food service completely went bust. You know, food services aren't always been a, you know, a good part of our business. So I think for Reem and I I think the thing I've always been happy about is that on the business decisions.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:59:14 Speaker 3](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[2008 yeah.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:59:21 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Yeah.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:59:34 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[From flavors to product innovation lines to design, we've always aligned. We haven't had a lot of issues on the business side. Rings trusted me with, you know, running the finance or operation side, obviously hiring the right people, who who run it.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[00:59:50 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[But interpersonal communication styles just. I realize that's not where I thrive, and that doesn't, you know, I don't shine the best in that. So I think there was a lot of conflict during those years.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[01:00:02 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[The other thing is that you weren't just selling like if if a consumer goes to the grocery store, many of them are just looking for a low price, right? But you weren't just selling.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[01:00:13 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Premium teas. But you were you were using really. Still. Do you use expensive material, biodegradable? And I mean, you can either you're packaging, you go to great lengths not to use industrial inks and things like that, right? I mean that and that I'm assuming that's more expensive.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[01:00:32 Speaker 3](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Yeah. So you know, between purchasing organic tea, going fair trade, which adds a premium that goes back to the tea farmers, that adds more and then the packaging itself, we.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[01:00:46 Speaker 3](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Very conscientious around, you know, in our environmental footprint. So we use soy based inks from the beginning. We didn't understand why people use shrink wrap. So we never use shrink.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[01:00:57 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Wrap around the tea box, right?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[01:00:59 Speaker 3](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Around the tea box. Yeah. So you're you're already got the bag sealed. And then finally this year, because we knew that.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[01:01:07 Speaker 3](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Packaging that the tea wrapper itself, you know, was something that went into landfills. We converted all of that into a plant based wrapper that is, you know, hugely revolutionary. If everybody could do that.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[01:01:12 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Yeah.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[01:01:20 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Were you ever under pressure from investors to reduce your price point or?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[01:01:25 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[And distributors or retailers at all?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[01:01:30 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Well, you know, it's funny because when we launched 20 years ago, we were the most expensive team on the shelf by 2030% and lot of retailers were like, you're crazy. You're never gonna sell this at 499 a box. And you know the the highest price to you other than this was 399.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[01:01:46 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[And we're like, well, we can't get it to you cheaper than that. And now, you know, we're probably standing around 699, and we're not the most expensive. We're still, you know, in the top two or three most expensive brands. So we still get that pressure and we we see, you know, our biggest challenge today.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[01:02:04 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Thing is, some of the big conglomerates are buying the smaller tea brands, so we do have to promote more now than we probably ever have, which is ironic. 20 years into the business we're promoting now then I think yes, than you've ever had. When I look at our promotional spend, it's just getting tougher and tougher.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[01:02:14 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Yeah.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[01:02:24 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[In the way that the big, you know, multibillion dollar corporations are buying all these small brands and we're pretty much one of the last privately held brands on the market.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[01:02:34 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[When was that like? What? What do you remember about the turning point being in terms of?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[01:02:40 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Hitting a point where you were not having to worry about cash flow and money and when did you start to see profitability, do you?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[01:02:48 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Remember that? Yeah, I was. After 10 years of running the business because we dumped a lot into the business to build the brand and do trade shows and.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[01:02:57 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[But about 10 years into the business, we were able to kind of get a lot more solid and and create a profitable and beat.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[01:03:04 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[And it was right around then that we had a lot of cash because we raised about 5 million and then we raised about, you know, five years later, 25,000,000 to take out some investors. And luckily when we raised that 2515 years into the business, we were able to finally take out our dad's.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[01:03:24 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[$1,000,000 working land capital, which was probably for me the biggest moment of success.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[01:03:30 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[We we leave my father of any debt on the business and he was so patient for all those years.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[01:03:36 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[And know that in 2016, Smuckers acquired a small stake in new Me, and it's still privately owned. And you've got some investors and you guys are obviously owners of it. I wonder, I mean, you guys have.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[01:03:50 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[In grinding away now for a long time at this, I know you recently stepped down as CEO.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[01:03:57 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[But is there ever a part of you?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[01:03:59 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[That.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[01:03:59 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Just wants to, you know, sell your stake and kind of enjoy your life without having to grind away every day.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[01:04:09 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Well, I do enjoy my life every day and I don't feel like grind away. Luckily, we have a great team, so I feel the balance of life is is.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[01:04:18 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Here, but as far as the choice of whether I would want to sell, I think it all depends on who the partner is. I think would be open to it if it really made sense for the future of new me because you know, we don't want it to plummet and disappear in three to five years, which some brands do when they exit.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[01:04:38 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[But we want it to thrive and we want the farmers and the planet to thrive because money has created a legacy and.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[01:04:45 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[It's an educational courses. It's a founding Big Corp. It's one of the leading fair trade organic brands in in the whole world now and we wanted to continue to live those values and and change the way people drink and eat.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[01:05:00 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[And when you think about the what you wanted to build and what it is today?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[01:05:06 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[I know that you know, you talked about you, then have a business plan that kind of kind of haphazard as at the start in the late 90s. But do you think it had you had this kind of crystal ball to see where you were today, you would have thought? Yep, that makes sense or you would have been surprised or how do you think you would have thought about?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[01:05:22 Speaker 3](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[This I think I would have been surprised that I would have.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[01:05:26 Speaker 3](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Just in this long.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[01:05:29 Speaker 3](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Because at the time I didn't plan my life more than three months at a time, and I remember calling a friend. You know, after maybe five years of walking to the maybe even longer walking to the same PO Box every day and picking up the mail.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[01:05:48 Speaker 3](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[I said I I can't believe I'm still doing.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[01:05:50 Speaker 3](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[This.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[01:05:51 Speaker 3](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[So that's one and for sure I would not have predicted that we have would have gotten to where we have.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[01:06:00 Speaker 3](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Of where? You know, I go to a coffee shop or a little local cafe in my town and there's no me, you know, and my husband's always like she's the owner and all embarrassed. And they're like.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[01:06:12 Speaker 3](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Oh my gosh.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[01:06:13 Speaker 3](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[So I wouldn't have never expected that.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[01:06:18 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[I mean, Mimi has been the best vehicle for me personally and to learn and grow so much about where we could put our time and tarim's point, you know, giving yourself to something for so long.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[01:06:32 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Lung to really mature in it and allow it to mature. And it is. That's where the lessons for me have really come. But I think there were some moments we could have probably grown more had we not protected the brand because I think there was a point we protected the brand from being too mainstream too quick.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[01:06:39 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Yeah.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[01:06:52 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[And staying in the Ritz, Carlton's and the Fairmonts and the Dean and Delucas and and because Walmart wanted us in year 7-8, you know, Trader Joe's wanted us in year 2 Target wanted us when we were young and we we kind of said oh we're not ready for them yet, we could have grown more in the mass market and grocery quick.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[01:07:10 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Which would have created more impact because you know more revenue, more product, more profits. So I just think there was moments we held it back from rapid expansion.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[01:07:24 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[When when you think about the journey that you guys went on, I mean you were, you were sort of drifting.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[01:07:29 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Right in your early 30s trying to figure out what you were going to do and it wasn't clear and and and you had that moment when when you were driving home from a substitute teaching gig and you just kind of lost it. You know, when you look back on your life now and and what you've accomplished and and what you guys have built, how much of that do you attribute to?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[01:07:48 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[The hard work you put in and how much do you think it has to do with luck?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[01:07:51 Speaker 3](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[I mean, I would say a lot of hard work, a lot of hard work.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[01:07:57 Speaker 3](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[I mean from when we started, 30I was 31 those first ten years was, you know, wake up at 6-7, stop working at 11.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[01:08:09 Speaker 3](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Work on the weekends, demoing at stores, going to different events.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[01:08:14 Speaker 3](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[It was just.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[01:08:15 Speaker 3](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Constant. You know, I think we had a lot of good breaks. You know, the \*\*\*\*\*\* was a great break. You know, we got a lot of good press hits one time we were on the cover of the natural foods.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[01:08:28 Speaker 3](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Publication that all of a sudden got us distributors. So we had a lot of good breaks. We were lucky because you know.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[01:08:35 Speaker 3](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Our father helped us and he he had worked hard and had made money, so it was a combination of a lot of things about you.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[01:08:44 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[I mean, I'd say hard work is it took a lot of hard work. It took the first 3-4 or five years of 9000 hour work weeks. Yeah, there were definitely some lucky moments that really helped us and a lot of angels surrounded us. And I think those angels, sure.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[01:09:01 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Us because they cared. They saw what Newman's essence was about, and they wanted to see us succeed. So to have those kind of people with us that really believe in the journey, believe in in the mission. I wouldn't say that's luck. I wouldn't even say it's hard work. I would say it's just an energy force that maybe has been.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[01:09:22 Speaker 1](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Able to bring it's now its own living creature. It's way beyond dream and I it's way beyond our team. So yeah, I think it's been. It's amazing.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[01:09:33 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[That's Ahmed Rahim and Reem Hassani, Co founders of Numi organic tea. By the way, those tea houses Ahmed helped start in Prague. Two of them are still around, so Ahmed's not involved anymore. And when it comes to tea, he sticks to herbal. About four months ago, he completely cut out.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[01:09:53 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Caffeine, which means no more black or green tea at all.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[01:09:59 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

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[01:10:10 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

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[01:10:30 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[With research help from Derek Gales, our production staff includes JC Howard, Rachel Faulkner, James Dalhousie, Julia Carney, Farrah Safari, Liz Metzger, Janet Ujung Lee, and Annalise. Over our intern is Harrison VJ Troy and Jeff Rogers is our executive producer.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[01:10:49 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[I'm Guy Raz, and you've been.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[01:10:51 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[Listening to how I built this.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[01:11:03 Speaker 2](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)

[This is NPR.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gXY)