# Audio file

[Seventh Generation Alan Newman and Jeffrey Hollender.mp3](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

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

[Hey, it's guy here and really quick before we start this episode, there are a few bad words that you will hear that we did not bleep out. If you're listening with kids, just be mindful.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[We were working.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[With a tissue paper manufacturer out in Wisconsin that made all the paper products. Thought we were crazy, by the way. 'Cause, you know, we were selling unbleached, 100% recycled fiber bathroom tissue, which was the scratchy stuff that you found in a gas station.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[And we insisted that it said made with 100% recycled paper. It had always been made with 100% recycled, but they hit that and all the promoted all the material.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[Oh, because consumers didn't want that.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[No. Why no.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

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

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

[Toilet paper made of recycled paper. They thought we were absolutely out of our mind.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[From NPR, it's how I built this a show about innovators, entrepreneurs, idealists and the stories behind the movements they built. And, Guy raz. And on the show today, how two men who probably had no business going into business together went into business together and built.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

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

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

[7th generation of Pioneer and eco friendly cleaning products. Back in September of 2020, we received an e-mail from a listener named Kiara. She suggested we consider interviewing her father, Jeffrey Hollander. My dad, she wrote, started 7th generation in 1988. He. Is kind, intelligent and is as interested in doing good as ever. He would never write an e-mail like this himself, but I think his story and the story of 7th generation. Is important to where we are in the world right now. It's filled with hope. And pain. As all the best stories are. Well, we were intrigued in part because 7th generation is one of the iconic brands in the eco friendly cleaning category and in part because Kiara said the story is filled with hope. And pain. So we started digging. And what we found surprised us. For starters, we discovered that there was another founder. His name is Alan Newman and back in 1992, just a few years after the company was launched. Alan and Jeffrey had a bitter falling out. Alan was ousted and since then the two men have barely spoken. So we called them up and asked if they'd be willing to appear on the show together to tell their story. They thought about it and to our surprise they agreed and even seemed to enjoy themselves during most of the interview. Coming on to the show in this episode is the first time they've come together to talk about the founding of 7th generation and their very difficult breakup as business partner. So perhaps more than any other conversation I've ever had with Co founders. This one has an incredible amount of insight into what it takes for two people to build something bigger than themselves, and how the relationship between partners is actually more important than the skills each one brings to the table.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

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

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

[7 generations started out as a mail order catalog. It sold a curated collection of. Eco friendly household goods. But eventually it became one of the first companies to mass produce detergents, paper towels, and other products that are meant to be better for the planet by the. 2000s. The companies products could be found on the shelves of virtually every supermarket in. And in 2016, seventh generation was acquired by the multinational Unilever. For between 6 and $700 million. This small little hippie. Allen and Jeffrey cofounded is now part of a giant company that owns everything from Lipton tea to axe body spray.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

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

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

[And even though Alan and Jeffrey were and are very different personalities. One thing they did share was a restless and even rebellious past. Neither followed the conventional path from college into a steady job. Alan Newman grew up on Long Island in the 50s and 60s, and he didn't care all that much about school. Jeffrey Hollander grew up in Manhattan. His dad was a powerful advertising executive, and like Alan, Jeffrey also remembers struggling in school. And at home. His family life was hardly a happy one.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[It was, you know, my dad was obsessed with working. He was. A tense, tightly wound guy who wasn't a lot of fun to be around. My mother was an artist and my parents didn't get along.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[Thank you.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[They didn't really like each other very much. I also. Felt fundamentally uncomfortable in the very affluent environment that I grew up in. I mean, I I remember like I grew up on Park Ave. Which is a very fancy St. in Manhattan.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

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

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

[And I felt that that sort of elite part of society was not something that I wanted to be associated with.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[And I guess you when you went to college, you went to Hampshire College? But I guess you didn't. Really last very long. You dropped out, I think after a year or so. And sometimes after that you ended up living in Toronto with your girlfriend at the time. And so tell me the story. What did you do there?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[Well, I I was trying to figure out what I wanted to do and I read an amazing book by Ivan Ilich, who's an educational philosopher called Deschooling Society and Ivan Elix. Philosophy was that. Formal education in universities constrain the flow of knowledge more than facilitate it. Those who are affluent, who can afford it, get access to it. Who aren't? Don't. And so he said, you know what we really need to do is we just need to find bright people. And let them teach other people in their homes, in their offices. And so I started the skills exchange of Toronto, totally modeled on a chapter of the book that I had read, never having had any business experience or never having studied business. I was, you know, 1920 years old. We basically printed up this little catalogue with all these short courses. Lasted a night before a week. And I love finding the teachers. And I love writing up the course descriptions. And the thing was incredibly successful and we had a little newspaper that we put in what was sort of similar to the village voice in New York. We stuck 10s of thousands of these little course catalogs in this newspaper, and lo and behold, people send in checks and registered for courses. I think the second year we had 30,000 people register for these courses. So it was wildly successful.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[And what kind of classes is like photography or like whatever anything.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[It was sort of anything. It was photography, it was cooking, but it was introduction to Marxism. Was alternative healthcare therapies? They were very. The classes were, you know, 1525 bucks they were.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[Hello, welcome.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[Cheap you. There were no tests. Were no quizzes.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

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

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

[It was people engaged in the pure joy of learning because they had a passion to do so.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[You're running this program in Canada, and it was a nonprofit, right?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

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

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

[It was who started as a nonprofit. I guess. Something happens. Which kind of shuts it down. Happened. I mean, yeah.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[Well, I I made a big mistake. Failed to get working papers.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[In Canada.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[In Canada and I had a pretty high profile because of this successful startup. And one day the Royal Mountains showed up in the office, handcuffed me and threw me in jail because I was an illegal alien. I was working in Canada without working papers.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

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

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

[Well. So this is like I guess late 78, early 79 ish, you end up going back to New York in 1979 to kind. Regroup and figure it. Yeah, and. And you decided to reconstitute this idea. But in the US, you couldn't do it in Canada. But from what I understand, you decided to do it as a for profit this time around, not as a nonprofit.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[Yeah, my dad thought it was really stupid to start. Non. You can't really make much money, so he said start a for profit and I. I took that to heart in more ways than one, and instead of teaching an introduction to Marxism, we were teaching how to marry money. We were teaching the art of flirting how to get invited to the right parties.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[And by the way, where did you? Where did you distribute these catalogs? Would just drop them off and like. Shops and stores? Or would you mail them?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[To people New York Sunday. They were inserted in the certain zip codes of the New York Sunday Times, and it was like. I mean, we would put hundreds of thousands of these in The Sunday Times and the next week the checks would just roll in. Was pretty amazing.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[I guess at one point you even got onto the Phil Donahue show, which probably at that time was a huge deal because you had you had a course called how to marry money, which just sounds horrible. I mean, but you won't Phil Donahue show with the person who lectured, taught that class how to marry money. By the way, what was the what? Was the suggestion. How do you do that?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[Well, this was a taught by a woman named Joanna Steichen, who was Edward Steigen's wife, the famous photographer. Her claim to fame was that she had married money because he was a pretty wealthy. Photographer and she would give you all kinds of tips and and I mean literally this we had auditoriums of four to 500 people taking this class every other week and we did go on the Phil Donahue show together. And we had. Horrible, horrible reception from the crowd. The crowd thought that this was a terrible. Immoral thing to do. We were teaching people terrible values and I was. I was really heartbroken after the show. I I felt that. Oh, my God. What have I? What have I done with my life? I've gone from being a sort of. Of principled, politically responsive, concerned adult to someone who's teaching values that are pretty abhorrent.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[Jeffrey, I want to just pause for a moment and and turn to Alan. By the way. I I'm so sad. Not on camera because I'm Alan. Love your beard, your beard. Amazing, it's.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

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

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

[It's it's better than a civil war, reenactor.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[It's it's starting to take on a life of its own.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[It's really cool. I love it.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[Thank you.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[So you you graduated from Southampton College on Long Island around, I guess the late 60s or early 70s. And then from what I understand, you were married when you graduated from college, right?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

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

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

[You get. You get married pretty.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[Young, I did.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[But just be. You're no longer married to this person, right?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

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

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

[Did you meet at college?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[Yeah. Yeah. She was at the same school that I was. And when I graduated college, we were kind of fed up with the United States, frankly. You know, I was one of those people with long hair and a beard and we decided we were gonna go see what Canada was like because that was a natural path for a lot of people we knew. So we ended up probably spent a month, you know, camping our way through Canada, but there was nothing that spoke to us and said we're gonna stay here. We came back to Long Island, did our laundry. Change clothes and decided to go to Vermont. On a whim. So most things in my life have not been planned. One of my favorite phrases is everybody has. Greatest strength is also their greatest weakness. One of mine is, I tend to say yes. If somebody calls us, hey, you know, can you talk to me about this? Say yes. So somebody says, hey, you know, are you interested in this? Go. Well, sure, I'll listen. I find that saying yes opens doors. And so we just decided to come to Vermont. We found people were. They didn't care that I had a. They didn't care that I had long hair and we kind of settled in.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[And so all right, you start living in Vermont and eventually I guess you settle in in Burlington. Yeah, and you got involved in in like a garden supply store or you you help like Co found it. Like how did that come about? It like, hey, you know, let's let's do garden supply store.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[Well, no. First of all, and it may be a more sensitive to the term founder, I don't consider myself to be a Co founder of garden supply. There was a guy named Will Rapp. I went along with Will and I was at #2. Was kind of. The finance and OPS guy, which is quite humorous to me these days.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[And by the way, this wasn't like so much of A brick and mortar business, but but more of a mail order, right?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

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

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

[So so it was a business where people would order.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[Garden supplies correct through a catalog and the business. My description is the business didn't grow fast enough. For both will and I to be in the same. Business and, you know will was the one who really taught me. I taught me a. I actually learned a lot at Garden of Supply about creating culture in a business, but will wanted to do things his way. I wanted to do things my way and we started clashing and we came to an agreement. That since I had really built the fulfillment system, the computer system. I was going to start a business using the computer system using the fulfillment system to sell time to nonprofits who had small mail order divisions that I could run through.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[So just to understand, you were going to use systems that you developed to basically do work for other mail order companies?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[Yeah, yeah. So I had a bunch of. Clients of which one of them was a nonprofit called The New America. Had the most God awful catalog you've ever seen.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[What do they?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[Sell they. They sold energy conservation and renewable energy product.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[It's like what, like light bulbs?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[They probably had solar panels. They probably had a weather stripping. They probably had, you know, low flow shower heads, but to say that they sold it, I think is is a misnomer.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[I got you, OK.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[They really did no business. Catalog was indecipherable. It was just the worst catalog I've. So after the first year I sent them a.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

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

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

[If you really want to do some business, here are my suggestions and I and I outlined what I would do.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[And what were your? What were your suggestions like? Make it. Offer better products like what do you member telling? To do.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[I think I was I you know, my memory on this stuff. I'm going to make it up, guy, but I probably told them, you know, you need to focus on a lifestyle. Need to educate the customer because you got to remember back in the mid. Mid to late 80s, nobody knew what environmentalism was. Nobody really cared, and so I said you got to educate your. You got to make the pictures bigger because nobody did these tiny little pictures and and they talked in technical terms. I said you got to tell why is it a benefit to the customer? And so I made these suggestions.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

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

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

[And they came back and said, boy, those are great. So why don't you buy us and and you can. And yeah, they said, well, you.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[Fly us out. Should buy it. And do you remember what they offered? How? They asked for.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[I don't think we got to that.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[But you. Just like this is not for me.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[Yeah, I didn't have any money and I knew it was going to cost money to grow and I didn't believe anybody cared. I truly I didn't see the market for it at all. And so finally I got a call from one day and they said. We're. So either we're going to ship everything to you and it's your business to do whatever you want or we're going to throw it all in the garbage can.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[So wait, they said. We're just saying. You can have it for free do. Want. Is that essentially what they were saying to you?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[Yeah, pretty. No, not pretty much.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[Exactly. And they were going to give you the brand, Renew America and all the.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[Copy whatever was part of that catalog. We're going to pack it up. Going to send it. You got.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[It but but like you said, you didn't think this could ever be a viable business, so why would you even want it? For free.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[I really, honestly and truly I did not the the line that I've used a million times, which is 100% true, is my brain is saying no, no, no, no, no. And out of my mouth comes I'll take it.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[I'll take it.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[And to this to this day. I say God spoke through me. I don't know where that came from. Had no interest. I didn't believe there was a. I didn't have the money to do it, and yet I said yes.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[All right.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[So you get the catalog business from them and. You gotta make it work. What do you do? Your first step.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[Um, well, in the catalog world, you've got to have your catalog in the mail. In August, to start competing for the holiday business. So I had six weeks. I had a month or six weeks to get a catalog together.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

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

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

[I couldn't take any new photography, so the catalog was originally 8 1/2 by 11. Since I couldn't increase the picture size, I cut the catalog in half. We went to what's called digest size and that made the pictures look bigger. I changed the name to 7th generation.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[Where does that come from?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[Well, it it comes from the the Iroquois quote that whatever we do, we should be thinking about how it will affect the next 7 generations and that that was consistent with, you know, what we were thinking at the time is that this will really need to change the.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[This right, right.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[We're thinking from. Immediate to longer term.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[How did you have the money to do this, by the way?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[Well, you know, Burlington's a small town. And so I had relationships. Was a printing company that we used, so I went to them. And said, hey, how would you like to take a? And how about you put my catalog and I'll give you a percentage of revenue or whatever deal I struck. And so they printed the catalog for me and I just had to get the catalog out.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[And how did you improve the catalog? Like, what did you do?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[I focused on. I always knew that people didn't understand why they should use a water saving showerhead, so we ran these columns down the side, you know, talking about why you should do that. And it was really that that early catalogs was really, I wrote pretty much every word of them and they were written from. Passion. And from enthusiasm more than from any kind of research and. If I remember correctly, I focus more on the economic gain.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[Or you would save money.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[You save your money, you'd save money. Going to get a shower. Is perfectly comfortable. It'll compare with most shower heads, but you're going to save money and this is really where I personally learned.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

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

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

[That you really need to sell from benefit, not feature. You know the feature that you're saving the environment. Yeah, that was nice, but it was only good after you passed the what's in it for me?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[And did you get the catalog out by August?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

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

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

[A lot of people. Did you get a lot of orders? Really like significant number of orders.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[It blew me away.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[It blew you away, yeah.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[I. Yeah, it blew me away.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[Wow all. So Alan, just just pause for a. I want to Jeffrey want to bring you back into the story because we left off with you running this business in New York that. I. But was making you kinda feel soulless and you've been doing these in person classes. And then I read that around this time you started to put some of those classes on tape cassettes and then sell them in in stores. Yep. That kind of got you into the books on tape business and that actually started to do pretty well, right?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[Yes. And we started buying rights to New York Times best sellers and putting them on tape. Wow. And finally we. We were out looking to make a distribution deal and we were meeting with Warner Publishing and they basically said, Gee, we love this business. Think it's fantastic, but we don't want to distribute the products. We want to buy the business and.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[Wow. So you thought you were going to meet with them for a distribution deal, but actually they want to buy it outright.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[And they. They offered us a price that was we couldn't refuse. They basically looked at the rights that we owned and controlled and valued the business on our rights portfolio. And came up with a number that just totally blew my mind. Millions of dollars and we decided to sell the business. And I remember my dad. Got a big check. Don't. Maybe $1,000,000 or so.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[As an investor, his return.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[As an investor, yeah, he was an investor in the business and it was the first time in my life where he where I I felt like I had finally met with his approval. Having dropped out of college, he was very upset about he. He he often would say to me you're going to be so embarrassed when you go to a job interview and they ask you where you went to college and you're going to have to say I never graduated. And of course my response was I don't ever plan on going on a job interview, and I never did. But he was really proud of that and but I didn't last long as an employee of Warner Communications.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[So you from what I understand, you decide. Want to? Better block and write a book about.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

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

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

[Guess you want to kind of make amends for how to marry money and those kinds of lectures. Decide to write a book called How to make the world a better place, which is great. How did you come to that realization that you wanted to do this?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[Well, as you said, I needed to redeem myself somehow.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

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

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

[But it was. It was just as much an exploration of all the ways in which you could do good stuff in the world. And I remember I I wrote the entire book on these long yellow legal pads. At the New York Public Library on 42nd St. and I would sit in that Library Day after day doing research and really exploring, looking at the world of socially responsible investing, looking what was happening in the world of human rights. Looking at what was happening from an environmental perspective and the book was really a compendium of all the good things one could do on a full time on a part time basis. To help make the world a better. OK so.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[Alan has his catalogue now and he's named 7th generation. Meantime, Jeffrey, you are researching your book how to make a world a better place. And I guess you you end up in Burlington.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

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

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

[Did you come across Allen?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[Well my my memory is that I perhaps unlike Alan, loved the idea of the Renew America catalogue, I thought. The idea of selling people. Energy efficient environmental products was a great idea.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[You had found out about Renew America in your research for the book how to make. Little bit of this, OK.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[Yes, exactly. And somehow I tracked Allen down and I basically said I'm sort of heartbroken that Renew America has walked away from this. I'd love to help in some way. If you're going to continue and I could raise some money, I have some connections. Think I could help. And my recollection is, Alan. Gee, I'm in the middle of getting this first catalogue outlet's talk in the New year in, in January.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[Was so interesting about what ALM was doing that really caught your eye I. I mean. Were you looking at the possibility of maybe a? This thing here.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[Absolutely. I mean I I love the idea. Of a business that instead of teaching people how to marry, money was helping them solve environmental. We were facing so it was a good business, an opportunity to do, to use business, to have a positive effect on the world.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

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

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

[And the way the relationship started was I offered to write a business plan or help write a business plan for the business to raise money. And that evolved into us becoming partners in the business and that happened, I believe, in January of. 1989.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[Just curious, Ellen. What was it that convinced you to work with? I mean, did you see in Jeffrey somebody who maybe had those skills that you needed to help with?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[No, no, I it was much simpler. But I had enough experience in the catalog business to know that I had a a financial hill to climb.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

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

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

[And I knew that running the business day-to-day and raising money, which was never my strength, by the way. Would would never get me over the hurdle if I was going to continue in this business. I needed capital and I needed a lot of it. And since I did not have the ability, Geoffrey was my best option.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[And and you need capital because the demand was increasing, which means that you needed more inventory and also you need to expand right to grow the business.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[It's growing a business, exactly.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[Need momentum, yeah.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[I mean, my recollection was we spent way more money acquiring customers than they generated in revenue. So every time we acquired a new customer, we lost money. And the hope was that over time, over years they would repeat their purchases and they would become profitable. But they weren't profitable at first.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

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

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

[And so acquire. How would you? I'm assuming you just mail them a catalog. Hope that people order. That right?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[Yeah, but 99 out of 100 people didn't buy, so you had the cost of printing and mailing the catalog, and it's the lifetime value of those customers.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

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

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

[That you hope will turn the business around at some point, but that point was very, very, very far in the future.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[All right. So so the two of you start to work together on the 7th generation thing and and you had to raise money and Jeffrey was going to be the key to raising that money.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[Play it down.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[So Jeffrey. Where did you start?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[The key to raising money for 7th generation was the people who had invested with me in my prior business made a lot of money for every dollar they put into the company, they got $10 back. They were happy.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[So they're. Jeffrey, what's the next thing you're doing? 'Cause, we're on. We're we're going to join that ride.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[Right. The vast majority of the investors were those investors from the prior business and they put up $850,000 in 1989. As the first of an endless series of fund raising cycles.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

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

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

[I was always amazed at Jeffreys ability to raise money. I understood he had previous relationships, but we would go to meetings. And do pitches, and we'd walk out and Jeffrey would turn to me and he would either say that we're not getting anything or he'd put a number out and said this is the number we're going to get because I never had a clue. I would walk out and. Don't have a clue whether going to invest or not, and he would hit the number right on the nose every time.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[And let me ask you this. Try to go back to that place in 1989. I have to imagine that having Alan by your side, this guy with a kind of scraggly beard or whatever, whatever you look like, but this clearly this guy from Vermont, who was sort of a hippie but running. An environmentally friendly catalog gave you even more authenticity.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[Absolutely. I mean, not only authenticity, but Allan actually knew what he was doing. He knew the catalogue business. Understood how it worked. He understood the marketing and the operations of it and I couldn't have done it on my own. Was just no way that was going to happen.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[All. So you've raised the money and. Jeffrey, you become the CEO and chairman, but you stayed in New York. Did not move to Vermont. The idea was you going to commute. And forth. And Alan, you were kind of running the operation in, in Vermont, right, correct.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

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

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

[OK. So from what I understand, you moved into a new space in a place called Kolkata. In Vermont, and it was like from what I understand, it was like this really kind of it was described as a hippie dance, like ping pong table. There's free bed and cherries. Chalkboards in the bathroom, like people could write things in the chalkboard about the company that they didn't feel comfortable saying in public. In the main conference room, there was no table or chairs, just pillows. Allen, is that? Am I describing this correctly?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[Yeah, you left out the now.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

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

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

[Others in that room OK. There's a nap room and so this was kind of a this is and was this your vision of what you you wanted a work environment to be like, which, by the way, sounds awesome. Totally work there.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[So again, what I learned at Garden of Supply, you know, we were on a fairly rapid growth path there also. What I learned. Was that the greatest obstacle to success was? Fear of people that they didn't know what they were doing and somebody was going to find out. And So what I discovered was that if I could get people to share their fears and realize that we're all in this together. And that it's better to ask for help that that created a much more productive and successful business.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[And by the way, were you still, were you still focused on selling the same stuff? What do you remember about the catalog? Were the products you were selling?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[Well, I think part of the breakthrough was, you know, if you sell someone a low flow shower head, they only need one of them. And I think the breakthrough was getting into the household product category with paper products and cleaning products because. Those were multiple frequent purchases. People were going to buy those over and over and over again. And you know, we got to the point where about 25% of our sales were made-up of these household products like bathroom tissue, paper towels and laundry detergent.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[And were you manufacturing them yourselves or were you working with the white, white labeling them and putting 7th generation on it?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

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

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

[Yeah, we were working with a Co Packer who would help us design the product and do all the manufacturing. So we had one Co Packer that made all the cleaning products down in New Jersey and a tissue paper manufacturer out in Wisconsin that made all the paper products.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[And it was all labeled 7th generation.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[And they thought we were crazy, by the way, because, you know, we were selling. Unbleached 100% recycled fiber bathroom tissue, which was the scratchy stuff that you found in a gas station.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[It was rough it. It was like prison toilet paper.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[Yes. Yeah. But people couldn't get enough of it. Loved it.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[So you had these like Co packing plants, just kind of laughing all those crazy weirdos in Burlington, Vt want this, like brown, rough toilet paper will make as much as they want.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

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

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

[The first load we had a guarantee a full trailer load. Because they we insisted that it said made with 100% recycled. Yeah, they always been made with 100% recycled, but they hid that in all the all the material.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[Because consumers didn't want that.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[No, no, I'm sumos.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[Why?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[Want me toilet paper made of recycled paper? I had to convince them to use our labeling on.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[That's amazing.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[That said, 100% recycled paper and they thought we were absolutely out of our mind.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[Although I think the. Best product we had in those days was the string shopping bag.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

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

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

[The string shop like just a like a net like.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[Yeah, it. It was like a big hair net.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[You seen in France, right?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[Exactly, yes.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[There's a French. Oh, the French farmers market bag, OK.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[That's where they came from. We had so many orders for this string bag. People were waiting and this is no joke. They were waiting over a year to get their string bag and I remember Alan and I took a wonderful trip to.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

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

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

[France to visit the factory to try to figure out how to get them to make more of these things and they they couldn't believe we were selling them.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

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

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

[Why is that? Well.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[In those days, it was sort of elderly French ladies who used them to go shopping with. Were not in. They weren't cool, but we sold so many of them. Was just incredible.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[Let me define this a little bit because I I lived the nightmare. In in Burlington on this one. The software we're using was back in the day of COBOL. Cobol was a very rigid programming. System and when they designed the the back order file for a mail order company, they just assumed that you would never need more than 5. That would mean you would have 99,999 items on back order and they said well, no company in their right mind would ever do this. So we don't. To add another digit, right? Well, we broke through that and took the entire system down when we went over 100,000 backers.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

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

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

[And every time the little French company tells us they're going to deliver it and they don't deliver it, we have to send notices to. And this is back in mail. Is not e-mail. This is $0.21 a an envelope mail we have to send everybody that has been further delayed and then. Punchline was finally they got a big shipment ready to ship us, and they did something on the label. And it got held up at customs.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[Oh yeah. Yeah. And.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[And we got a bill in the mail for I don't remember. It's something like $120,000 for penalties and it was a nightmare. The whole thing was a nightmare, but we finally got it. Out and that's how many we sold though we sold over 100,000 of these stupid things.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[Meantime, Jeffrey, you are working out of an office. New York. You got a couple people. Yep, the main headquarters is in, is in Vermont, and I guess eventually you did move there and from what I understand, for a time like you, you and Alan. Live together or live next door to each other. Do you remember?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[Boy, we didn't live. At least if we did, I blocked that out of my mind.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[But we were we were joined at the hip for a lot.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[You guys hung out. You. Yeah, you were separable.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[Those we did not.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[Live inseparable. Yeah, we were.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[We were.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[I mean, I considered Alan as close a friend as I had.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

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

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

[You know what I've learned over the years is that if you bond over common goals. You develop friendships and we had this tiger and we're holding on to the tail of this tiger and every day we're on the phone trying to figure out how to solve different problems and and to some degree we brought different skill sets to the the partnership, you know.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

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

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

[I agree with Jeffrey. I mean, you know, I consider Jeffrey one of my good friends at the time and.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

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

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

[We didn't make a decision without talking to each other.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[Jeffrey, how did?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[You feel about that? The culture at the office, that kind of. Hippie culture and the bean bags and the pillows and stuff. You think that actually that's a. Of. Good. Look for a a company like seven generation. You were you OK with it?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[Multiplicity of. I mean in, in, in some respects, I loved what Alan was doing and I learned a tremendous amount from him about how to build the culture that was aligned with the values of the business. And that was really cool. And yet, at the same time, I took a lot of \*\*\*\* for the nap room from investors. Was like. You really need a nap room. Is that a good use of our capital?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

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

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

[But. But I you know, Alan was a great teacher and I came to really appreciate the culture he was talking before about what people don't know. I mean, one of my fondest memories is that in our staff meetings, we would actually give a prize out to the person who. The biggest mistake that. Week and they would get a coupon to go out to dinner with their friend or their wife.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[What you had this tell? Tell me you had this thing where the person who made the biggest mistake that we actually got rewarded.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[Absolutely. Because we had a culture where we didn't want people to feel like they couldn't be open and share the mistakes they made. And if they made a mistake and covered it up.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

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

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

[The only thing that happened is someone else would make that same mistake.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

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

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

[So that was part of the genius of the culture that Alan began to build at the company.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[It was all about the speed that we were growing. People had to make decisions every. Day they couldn't keep coming to a boss to make a decision because something new was happening. They had to be empowered to make decisions and they had to be empowered when they made a bad decision. To bring it up and not hide it in the back of their desk. And it's something that I learned at Garden Supply and I've done it every business since then.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[What's amazing 'cause? Now this is commonly practiced in big companies like Google celebrates failure and you know, and it's become almost a fetish.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[Now we were we. Way ahead of our time in more ways than one.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[Yeah, it's. I read that there was an article that came out in 1989 in New York Times and mentioned 7th generation, which was a huge publicity coup for you at the time. And I think your catalog sales in 1989 I read were $1,000,000 in 1997 million dollars. You went from million to seven million in a year.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[With the. Of the 20th anniversary of Earth Day. The amazing thing was that the media wanted to find stories. About the environment and we were a great story. We got a huge amount of publicity. We had. Maybe it was a year or two later, but I remember we had a four page story in People magazine. That was unheard of for this tiny little Vermont company.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[So you're looking at this? Growth and you're thinking all right, 1989 BAM, 1997 million, 1991. And then there's a recession. The recession hits.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[Well, we planned my, my recollection is that for 91, we expected about 20 to 21 million in sales. Boy, were we wrong.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[And that was because of the recession.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[Well, I think it was the combination of the recession and the fact that the excitement that people had about the environment during the 20th anniversary of Earth Day did not carry through so many, many people who bought something.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

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

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

[And we expected that they would buy something else, didn't.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[Also, the war cause in the world of catalog marketing, anything that distracts people. Works against catalog sales because so much of it is. The other things you're talking about are all true, by the way. Not negating any of that. But when the Gulf War started, everybody turned on their television and was glued to the television. And our we went from, I seem to remember 12 to 1500 orders a day down to less than 100 and it was a disaster. There's no other word.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[For it was like jumping out a window and not knowing how far you're going to fall because. Every week we missed our numbers and every week we missed our numbers again and it was incredibly scary and disconcerting.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[Wow. I mean, at the end of 1990, you're doing 7,000,000 by the middle of 1991, you start to, you have to lay people off.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[No, it was. My recollection is we had about 120 people and we had to lay off half of them, almost 60 people, 50%.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[My worst recollection. I had a good buddy who was ruining the warehouse, who was a great. Jeff and he was having a party on a Saturday night, and Jeffrey and I had just made the decision who we were going to cut and we decided let's not tell him on Friday. Let's let him have the weekend. We'll tell him on Monday. And so I had to go to this party Saturday night knowing that on Monday I was going to be fired. 60% of the people who were at that party, it was probably one of the most difficult things I ever had to do.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[So you. This is clearly going to take its toll on both of you. You know, emotionally because you're it sucks to have to do that. Allen at this point. The toll of justice watching this thing kind of crater, and it affected you and you decided that you needed some time off. That is that your recollection?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[I would phrase it a little bit differently please. By this time, I had gone through the build up at Gardner Supply Company where I was working, you know, 8090 hours. A week then started niche marketing services where I had been. You know, I was down to 6570 hours a week and then the start up of 7th generation was 120 hours a week. May be exaggerating, but you got the idea.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[But yeah, sure it's it's a grind. It's grind.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[And I remember I was tired. When I saw the numbers, I was aware that we needed to really rethink what we were doing. Was not a a temporary set back that we really needed. To figure out how to generate some business, and I remember having talked to Jeffrey before. You know, talking about, I'd love to get a sabbatical before we have to go. You know, balls to the wall on the new holiday catalog, which was always our biggest catalog. And give me a couple months to get my head together and come back with what can we do here to help, you know, regrow this business. So when I left. That was my thinking.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[Jeffrey, you remember this? What do you remember about Allens decision to take a sabbatical? Did you respond to it?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[Yeah, I mean. You know, it's hard to separate what I felt at the time with my memory of what I felt.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

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

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

[I mean, I felt abandoned. I felt angry. I felt like I was on a ship that was sinking. And my partner, who's supposed to be steering the ship with me, just stepped off and left me alone with a boat that was really sick. I mean, I didn't know whether they would survive. Survive. So. And you know when things don't work out. Both parties have some responsibility, so there's no question that I probably didn't behave the way I should have. I might have felt like, you know, if you leave now, don't come back. But I might not have said that.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[Yeah, are. Are you that kind of do you tend to be conflict averse?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[No, but I tend to hold the grudge, so. I did see. Real sort of abandoned with a mess that I was not thrilled about having to sort out.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[And and Alan, do you I mean January 1992 you take a six month sabbatical?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

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

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

[Remember Jeffrey saying? Hey, what the hell you doing? Are you leaving or do? Do you remember him? Just sort of saying, OK, fine. See you later.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[Yep, I had really no clue how how annoyed Jeffrey was. Had no idea how angry. He was. And I didn't know until I sent an e-mail or a letter or however we communicated in those days, saying, OK, getting ready to come. Why don't we get together and let me talk about some of the ideas that I have put together that I'd love to start implementing and I got the dear John litter.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[You got a. You got a letter that basically said your time at the company is over.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

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

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

[It's so hard because we didn't talk during his sabbatical. At least, I don't think we were talking during your sabbatical. And for two people who were so close to all of a sudden be that separate, you know, left a lot of room for each one of us to be having our own thoughts in totally different directions.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[When you look back at the way it was handled, do you think that you had? No. That you had no other way of handling it. Or do you think you might have done it differently?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[You know, when I reflect on this, you know, anytime you have a close relationship that falls apart and anytime you hurt someone, there's nothing to feel good about. Mean that's a bad situation, and that's a personal failing on my part. But my my reflection is that one of the things we could have done that we didn't do is put things in writing when Allan left. So a written document that says Allen's taking. Six months off and he will return at the end of six months and fulfill the position he had before. I mean, that wasn't written down anywhere, so we were left with very different experiences and different points of view about what the outcome of the sabbatical would be.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[Jeffrey, it sounds like you wrote that letter thinking Alan would not be surprised that, you know, he was sort of out of the picture and, you know, it was kind of.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[No, I'm not sure that I thought he wouldn't be surprised, and I was probably relatively certain that he would be angry and hurt. For me, I think it would be crazy for me to expect anything else.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[Alan had how did you feel when you got it, when you got that?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[Well, I was totally shocked when I got the dear John Note and you know, you got to remember that. I really felt that we were friends.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

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

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

[I felt that we were in this together in my mind at least. I was doing the best thing that I could do for the business and I felt this was really my baby, you know? Jeff was clearly a valuable participant and partner in it. But I really still felt it was my baby. And the fact that my friend threw me out and stole my baby without even a \*\*\*\*\*\*\* discussion, you know, I was RIP \*\*\*\*.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[And we come back in just a moment. How Allens departure left a big hole at the company and have Jeffrey filled it with some very risky decisions, decisions that would turn 7th generation into a completely different company.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

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

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

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

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

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

[Thanks also to Nerd Wallet, a personal finance website and app that helps people make smarter money moves.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

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

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

[Have new money goals this year. Whether you want to use credit card points to plan a family vacation abroad once it's safe, or take advantage of low mortgage rates to refinance and save for your child's education nerd wallet. Best place to shop financial products to help make your 2021 money goals happen. Discover and compare the smartest credit cards, mortgage lenders and more at nerdwallet.com.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

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

[Hey, welcome back to how? Built this from NPR. I'm Guy Raz. So it's the early 1990s and Alan Newman has just been forced out of the company. He started 7th generation. He still owns about 20% of. But. Nothing. Not even a seat on the board.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[You know, I licked my wounds for a while and then I started coming out of it. And one of the things for me was how I got paid out of seven generation and the impact that that had on me when I, when I finally got paid for my. It wasn't. I didn't get a lot, but it essentially gave me. Enough to start up another business.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[Right. And and I I guess you got paid out in 1993, which was a bit after you were forced out of the company.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[Well. I got a phone call. Seven generation is going public. They need you to lock up your shares.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[And what does lockup mean?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[It means I agree not to sell my shares for 18 months after they go public.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

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

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

[And I said, why would I do that? They said because it will allow 7th generation to go public and I said why? I. You've never cared about my financial situation. Should I care about yours if? Really want. To solve this problem you need to buy me out.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

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

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

[And that's when. That's when I got paid out.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

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

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

[You sold? 23% of 7th generation I think. You got like 200,000 bucks from selling that?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[Something like that, yeah. And when that happened, a lot of my animosity subsided.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[And Jeffrey, around that time period, I mean, you were still living in in Burlington, which is not a big place. Mean did you ever run into Alan? You ever see him?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[We actually did see each other several times we. And I I don't know who instigated this, me or Alan, but we went to see a third party to try to reconcile our differences. And we had a series of meetings with a sort of marriage counselor type person to see if we could mend the relationship, which I don't think happened very successfully.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[You tried to do. Just for. Just for the sake of mending the friendship, or to see if he could come back to. The business I.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[I think it was just to mend the relationship.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[And and Alan, what do you remember about those those sessions?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[Honestly, I don't remember a. The only thing I really remember is. They were grossly unsuccessful. You know, we were both kind of dug into our point of view and neither one of us. My recollection at that time was willing to to accept that the other one had, you know, some valid issues that were worth discussing.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[And and do you remember feeling uncomfortable when you would see Jeffrey? You get like butterflies in your stomach like.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[No, my recollection is Jeffrey was so uncomfortable whenever he was around me that I loved him. My all time favorite. I was sitting on a plane in Burlington, getting ready to take off, and they're getting ready to close the door and there's seat next to me. That's open and I look up and there's Jeffrey getting on the plane and I immediately know what scene he's going to and. It's this little tiny. Puddle jumper that you know we're we're literally locked together. And so, you know, we say hi cordially, and Jeffrey sits down literally as he sits down, the pilot gets on the on the thing and says we we have little weight balancing problem. Do we have anybody up front who's willing to move that back?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

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

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

[And Jeff got out of that seat, really flinch. Do you remember that one?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[I don't, but I'm sure that was exactly what happened.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

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

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

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

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

[Right, Alan, I'm going to ask you that to hang on for a while. I want to turn to Jeffrey now and talk about what happened after you left 7th generation and and Jeffrey went on to delete the company.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

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

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

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

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

[Now, Jeffrey. So Alan is no longer part of the business, it's now. A shadow of what it was a year earlier, but you still believed in the business. Still believed it had potential. Yeah.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[I did, and at a certain point my perception was that potential was in a very different direction than the one we had been preceding that rather than having a catalog business I had. Developed a vision for a wholesale business where we would sell our products to retailers and attract consumers in retail stores to buy the brand. You know, that was that was a business that I had my own experience. With because of the books on tape business, sure. And. I just didn't understand and know the catalog business the way Allen did. Had done it for years and knew it well, I didn't.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[And so I guess like around this time it's it's clear you need to raise some cash and and as we heard Alan say earlier, you wind up taking the company public and that does bring in several $1,000,000. So. With that money, what were you now able to do at 7th generation?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[So we sort of did three things we. Built up our line of branded 7th generation products we were selling in the catalog a lot of other people's products. If we were selling sheets and towels and T-shirts, those were not ours with our name on them, so. We expanded the assortment of our branded products. So that was number. #2 was we redesigned and relaunched the Mail order catalog, hoping to get better results than we had been getting. And #3, we started experimenting actually having my brother Peter Hollander go to natural food stores in New York City and put our products on the shelf to see if they actually sold. And we got a pretty quick feel of what? Moving and there was no question that three products dominated the assortment. Bathroom tissue, paper towels and laundry detergent.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[So from what I understand, I mean this strategy started to to work. Mean you you had a terrible couple years. From sort of 1991, but by 1994, from what I understand, revenues back up you exceed $8 million. Your biggest year since I think 1990 at that point. And catalog sales, I guess at this point account for like 80% of what you're doing. So the strategy seems to be at this point working.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[The strategy was working and the challenge we faced was we had raised about $5 million of additional capital and the board and I came to the conclusion that we had two very different businesses. And they both demanded lots of money. And we decided that we should do something that appeared highly risky and bet on the wholesale retail business rather than the mail order catalog business, because that was my intuition about where the biggest upside was in the future.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[I guess the thinking was, look, we're really going to make money by being in stores in lots of stores rather than trying to just sell to individual people through mail order catalog.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[And the mail order catalog had a. I mean, it was a very wasteful business whether you got 1-2 or three customers for every 100 catalogs you mailed, you were creating tons of garbage and tons of waste for all the people that recycled those catalogs without even opening them. And postage costs were rising. Costs were rising. So we decided to place our bed on the natural product industry and work on getting more and more retailers like Whole Foods and bread and Circus and Mrs. Gooches on board with the brand.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[So this is 1995. You decide to sell the catalog business as you say. Mean this is 80% of your. Revenue, but it sounds like you it it was risky, but that you knew you kind of had to dump this aside. Could really focus on growth. Sort of like taking a half a step back to take 5 steps forward.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[Exactly. All right.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[So you are now fully focused on being in retail stores. So and I guess you guys enter Whole Foods, 7th generation enters Whole Foods in 1998 and was that like a major turning point for you? That. A A year or a time where you can point to and say that was the moment. Just, you know, turned a major corner.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[Yes, it was huge and it basically unleashed growth that would propel us from, you know, ten $12 million to five years later, almost $50 million. Whole Foods had so much credibility with the consumer that that trust rubbed off on us as well. So you know we we had sort of the Whole Foods stamp of approval by just being present in the store.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[And and you're still trying to convince other retailers around this time to? To carry your products. I have to imagine that she came across people who were like, listen, I used it. Lysol is better or Mr. Clean is better. Just kicks us in the \*\*\*\*. What would you say when people said that to you?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[Well, every product we sold, we sent to an independent lab and tested our performance against Lysol Tide or Bounty. And we had pretty good test. We were 90 or 95% as effective. I. We weren't 100% as effective or more effective. But we felt that we got the job done for most consumers and that was what would be good enough.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[And that's the data you would show to to retailers.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[Well, we would show that data, but we would also show a lot of sales analysis and basically what we said was. Not only are these products healthier and safer, but you will make more money per square foot. By selling them then you will selling traditional.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

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

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

[You'll have bigger margins. You'll sell more with less space. And honestly, that financial argument was often what was a winning argument because. These retailers are in the real estate business and they look at how much revenue they can generate per square foot of shelf space. And if you can create more profit per square foot, they're happy.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[You know, we had the founders of methadone a couple years ago, and one of the early insights they had was that you don't. They didn't have a whole lot of success telling their customers that their products were, you know, organic and plant based, etcetera. They didn't even, really. Advertise that they just advertised it as a great product that was effective. Did you find that appeals to consumers like, I don't know, better angels worked or, or did you just try to kind of? All the cleaning products has good cleaning products and good paper towels.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[No, I mean the truth was we sold health and safety First, Environment 2nd and as an end these products really work as well as traditional products. We believed that in order to really set ourselves apart. And particularly to appeal to these new moms who were having kids for the first time. That health and safety was critical as well as the environmental benefits. And yes, the products had to work. But that wasn't our niche. Our niche wasn't. We're cool and will look nice on your bathroom shelf. We appeal to a quite different market.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[What about kind of figuring out how to expand your product line? Mean were there any? Did you ever come up with products that just like were total dogs? Just you really wanted them to work and they just didn't.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[Oh sure, we created this product made of zeolite that you would put in your refrigerator and basically what it did was take the humidity out of your refrigerator to allow your vegetables to last longer. And your refrigerator to run more efficiently.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

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

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

[So it was an amazing product. It's used in many professional institutional refrigerators. I loved. I love the idea, but it was far too complicated A story to tell on a retail shelf. That was a total failure, right? No one bought it, unlike our diaper. I mean, when we got into the diaper business, I I was traveling in Europe and I saw these brown diapers. I said, wow. Unbleached diapers made from non chlorine ble. Pulp and I said I gotta have these. We gotta sell these. They were a success from day one. And that added you know about 1/3 to our sales.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

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

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

[That was a huge, huge driver of our our growth and expansion.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[And who is your first big kind of mainstream retailer that you were able to convince? Carry this stuff.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[Well beyond the focus on the natural food industry and Whole Foods, our first traditional grocery store was a grocery store called Albertsons in Southern California.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

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

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

[I grew up in LA. Know Albertsons, yeah.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[And we had a very unusual experience with Albertsons about two weeks after we got on the shelf and we were celebrating and excited because it was the first traditional grocery store. There was a labor strike at Albertsons because they were trying to reduce the healthcare benefits that their employees had. We were so idealistic that we felt that those were not the values that we wanted to be associated with, and we had a contingent of our employees pushing to take the products off the shelves and we debated and we debated. And the whole company sat down in a meeting together and some brilliant young man whose name I. Remember, came up with this idea. That we should take all the profits we generated from selling in Albertsons and donated to the Workers Strike Fund to help the workers extend the strike and hopefully win back their healthcare benefits. And that's in fact what we did.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[That is. I mean, this is 1995 when, let's be honest, consumers didn't care about that kind of stuff as much like today. If you did that, you know, you have a bunch of people who are like, Yep. But in 1995, I don't think consumers really care. Probably thought you were if. Even knew that you were doing it. Thought you were a little kooky.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[It was kooky and it was unusual and it was the exploration of a new way to embed values into business.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[All right, so the company is starting to do pretty well and I guess around this around like the end of the 90s ninety 9, you actually decide to raise some money and buy back all the shares and and take the company private again, so. What did that mean?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[Basically meant we had a small group of much more powerful, influential investors who were. Relatively traditional in their investment strategy, they liked the mission, but they loved the business performance and sales growth and some of the things that they considered to be silly or extraneous. They were willing to put up with as long as the sales kept growing at a fast pace.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[I want to go down a little bit of a rabbit. Here it's that 7th generation, and companies like it create great products with a great mission. But that also allow consumers to consume. But not feel as bad about it or feel like they're actually not doing any harm. I mean, for example, if you buy seven generation diapers. They're recycled. They're brown, but you're still producing a lot of waste. It's still going to sit in a landfill for 100 years, no matter what anybody says. You buy. 7/7. 7th generation. You're still buying it in a bottle. That is pretty much impossible to recycle, and I don't know. Just wonder about that. I mean, I I'm not trying to. Criticize you or anybody who does this. Still, I just. I can't get around this idea that it in some ways gives people this feeling like they're doing good when in fact they are still, you know, they're still throwing stuff away.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[Well, first of all, I totally agree with. And it's a fundamental challenge that the whole green responsible products industry faces, to be quite honest, it's often about being less bad rather than good. And I think we've gotten the two things confused I think. That when you're buying a 7th generation diaper, you're causing landfills to fill up. You're causing increased climate change. You're causing water pollution. You're having a bunch of negative. They're just not as bad as they would be if you purchased another brand. But being less bad is not being good. And I think we really need sort of a sustainability 2.0 that's focused on good products that's focused on cloth wipes rather than paper towels. That's focused on reusable diapers rather than disposable diapers. And that's why 7th generation just this year came out with cleaning products that had no water and no plastic packaging. Now, that's still not good, but it's better than having the plastic waste that we have with our traditional cleaning products.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[You know, overtime, Jeffrey, you start to make a name for. Not not only as the CEO of 7th generation but, but also as a kind of a leader in in sustainable like Green Eco friendly business as a whole. Which I guess there led to some tension between. You and the board directors. At what point did you start to reassess the role you were playing in? It sounds like in your head you started to feel like maybe this wasn't really the way to to save the planet. Don't know AM. Am I kind of projecting here?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[Well, in 2007 I began to reflect on my own personal goals and the impact I wanted to have. And it wasn't that I didn't want to be working at 7th generation. It was that I wanted to be doing different things than I was doing. I didn't want to be completely focused on the monthly profit and loss statement. I didn't want to be obsessed about. Product development. What I really wanted to do was help build this responsible business movement. And I wanted to write more. Wanted to speak more. I loved being the public face of the company, but I didn't love doing all the things that a traditional CEO does.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[And did that start to affect your performance as aceo, let's say the performance that is expected of aceo?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[I don't think. I mean, you know, 2010 was the best year financially that the company ever had with about a 50% growth rate. But you know, there were a series of factors that had created an increasingly tense situation with the board. One was we were in the middle of going to raise about $30 million of additional capital. And. There was definitely concern about how my shifting role would play with those new investors.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[Your shifting role focusing on.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[More public speaking, more building, the movement of responsible. You know, I was a board member of Greenpeace for 13 years. I was getting arrested for. Standing up for things that we believed in. And my board was definitely not comfortable with the CEO who was getting thrown in jail. That was one area of. Another area of tension was employee. We had built ourselves up to having a company where the ownership of 20% of the company was resting in the hands of the employees. One of the things that I was the most proud of. Hoping to get that to 30%. And that was another source of tension with the board because they felt that the employees had enough stock. Didn't really need any more.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

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

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

[There was. Know a third area which we had hired? This guy, Chuck Maniscalco, who was going to be the sort of business operational leader. He was the Gatorade guy who grew Gatorade from a billion to 4 billion. We hired him together. I came to the conclusion that he was the wrong person for that role, that his values really weren't aligned with the company. My mistake. My fault. The board loved him and the board wanted to keep him and the board was very nervous about the tension between Chuck and myself.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[So one of you had to go.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[One of us had to go and it wasn't going to be Chuck.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[So in 2010, you were fired.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[Yes indeed.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[I'm wondering though, if the year you were pushed out of the business was the most profitable year. Were you surprised that you were asked to leave to to step down?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[Yes, I was shocked and totally caught off guard.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[You were totally kind of unexpected.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[Totally unexpected. And you know, it was done in a somewhat brutal fashion because not only was I let go, but I was let go over the telephone on a Saturday morning and told that I wasn't even allowed to go back into the office. Ever again, I.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[Mean you you really took? This company to to where it was, you know. No. It was a little mail or business when you started it with Alan and now it's a. Huge force.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[$150 million.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[Were you OK? Were. I mean, how did you respond? Did you get? I think I would get depressed. I think I would go probably need to see somebody talk about it. Think it would be really hard for me to handle that, but that's me. How did you?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[I was and I did. Yeah, it was like a child that had been stolen from me. I was incredibly depressed, sad, angry. And yeah, it hurt. It hurt. Boy, I don't know that I've ever cried as much as I cried in the weeks and months following that experience.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[When we come back in just a moment. We'll hear how Jeffrey's former partner Alan Newman, reacted when he found out that the man who ousted him from his own company had now been ousted himself. Stay with us. I'm guy. And you're listening to how I built this from NPR.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

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

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

[Hey, my name is Peter Sagel and I am here to help you with the most pressing problem facing civilization today. There are too many good podcasts to listen to. Why not avoid that whole problem by listening to an extremely silly podcast hosted by me on WAIT Wait, Don't tell me it's wisecracks about the weeks, news shenanigans, fart jokes, and general silliness. And doesn't that sound pretty great, right? Listen to the wait. Wait, don't tell me podcast from NPR.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[Hey, welcome back to how I built this from NPR. It's 2. So it's 2010 and after 20 years of building and leading seven generation, Jeffrey Hollander is kicked out of the company by the board. And it. Like a gut punch, but at the same time.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[I feel like I have to take responsibility for what happened to me. Didn't happen all on its own. I contributed to what happened. I have to understand how my behav. Ior led to getting fired. I was very headstrong. Was impatient. And I was too focused on doing what I was passionate about doing and not focused enough on ensuring that I had brought the board along with me.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[Jeffrey, I want to bring Alan back into the. Alan, I know you've been patiently listening for a while. So. So thank you for your patience.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

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

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

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

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

[Time when Jeffrey was ousted. Were you following what was going on inside of 7th generation? Do you remember how you. Felt.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[Yeah. No, I I definitely followed it. Was aware of it, people. A small town. I know a lot of people who were working in 7th generation, so I I was certainly aware of what was going on and also while we're on the topic, you know, you didn't ask me. What did I learn from being ousted from 7th generation? And what's really interesting is I would have given you the answer that Jeffrey just gave you. I really let Jeffrey handle the board. Were his investors. I was busy trying to run the business. The board meetings were down in New York and I really stayed out of it.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

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

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

[In retrospect, I realized that was something that I've never done since. Know I always stay as Jeffrey put it, I think. Well put. You've got to bring your board along. You can't be out there in a different place, otherwise you will lose so. Yeah, it. I did follow it and I saw the similarities, but I'm not going to lie. I took solace in.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

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

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

[OK, how does it? Jeffrey and the deja vu certainly occurred to me.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[Ellen. Several, I think 5 or 6 years after Jeffrey left the company, Unilever acquired it for reporting for $700 million, which is incredible. When you found out about that, what did you think?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[Well, first of all, I think what Jeffrey did with the business after I left was in many ways brilliant, you know, certainly. Deserves a lot of credit for taking this concept in this fledgling business.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

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

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

[Was really down on Slack and finding the way. It's what entrepreneurs do they find. They climb over the mountains and that was a hell of a mountain that 7th generation had to climb and to get it into condition to sell to. Unilever, you know, when I got all the calls saying, well, how do you feel about big bed, Unilever buying your company, it's like well, number one, it's not my company. #2, I'm excited as hell. I always wanted to see 7th generation go. I saw no reason why it was a local regional national brand. And so the fact that Unilever took it over and is now expanding internationally to me was exciting as hell. Was my dream for it.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[So I actually want to rewind in time for a moment, because before we we left off with you, Alan.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

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

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

[You mentioned that after you left 7th generation, you went on to start a whole new venture and this is going to be mind blowing for craft beer lovers. It was called Magic Hat Brewing Company, which became a pretty successful craft beer. What's the story? How did that happen?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[So I had been looking for business to. I was trying to get into the music business and I had this friend who was working the the warehouse at seven generation. He came in one day and said I listen, this is not what I had in mind. I'm going to. And I said, what are you going to do? He said well. I'm going to go learn how to start a brewery. He had done a lot of home brewing, had won a lot of competitions and I said well, you know, we could start 1 here. He said. I said, yeah, I I got nothing else to do.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[So you and his friend, his name was Bob Johnson. You guys, what just decided, like, like, let's do this. And and did you have some kind of strategy? What did? What did you even know about the beer business?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[I knew nothing about. I I was not really a craft beer guy. You. I was much more of a pothead than an alcohol guy, and I figured, well, I better get educated and Bob had been following it so he knew what was going. Going on and he said, why don't we fly out to the Pacific Northwest? That's where it's most developed and we flew out to. We rented a car and we drove down to San Francisco and it took us 11 days. We stopped in. I think the number was like 33 breweries along the way and the AHA moment for me. Vermont already had three craft. This is 93 and I said this Vermont really with its 600,000 people. Need a fourth craft brewery? And everybody was doing the same thing. And so I was really struggling. With. Well, how can we be? Yeah, and all of a sudden, I went, oh, don't make this about beer.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

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

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

[Everybody was. 100% of the craft breweries were saying made with only the finest, all natural ingredients.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

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

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

[I banned that from our label. Banned that from our thinking. I wanted to be in the music business, so we're going to do a craft beer company, but we're going to focus on pretending we're a music company and supporting music became the lifestyle. This is long before anybody else was doing that. In the craft business was. Putting their beer infest in music festivals, you know, I always thought that I would measure my success at Magic Hat when Ben and Jerrys was at its prime here in Vermont. Nobody ever went to a party. Without taking at least a pint or two pints of Ben Jerry's with them, they grabbed Ben and Jerry's because Ben and Jerry's was really cool. And they knew that everybody there would be thrilled to see Ben and Jerrys there. So I made that my North star I. I don't want to be a beer company because that's too limiting. I just want them to buy it because it's \*\*\*\*\*\*\* cool and they. This is a great thing to take to a party.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[And and Magic had kept growing. I mean you you started to to distribute it nationally. How did you guys do that?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[You know, no success and no failure is ever because of 1 issue.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

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

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

[One factor was that there was Bob and. There were two of us. Most other craft breweries in those days were started by an engineer who loved home brewing and knew nothing about business, knew nothing about finance. They just were fascinated with being able to put this equipment together and make beer. Well, I had just come out of an experience with 7th generation where I had seen the effects of growing too fast and hitting a wall. And so when I got into Magic Hat, I said we're not going to do that. We're going to grow organically.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

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

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

[We opened up new territories very slowly. We let demand exceed supply for 18 months before we started trying to match supply and it kept the demand for our beer growing until you know, we were. In the top ten largest craft breweries in America.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

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

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

[Alan, I know that you know both of these enterprises. Hat and 7th. I mean, there are different chapters in your life and some, you know, maybe fonder memories than others. And I know that that magic Hat got eventually got to some some pretty severe financial problems during the 2008 recession and and and ultimately you had to sell it off.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

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

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

[And you're not involved with it anymore? But I mean, if you think about it right, I mean you you helped to create two really iconic brands, right? Mean that's pretty.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[Let's.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[I mean, did you do you take pride in that? Any part of you take pride in that.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[Absolutely. I'm very proud of what I've left. More proud in some areas than others, but on whole I look at what I've done more. As you know, building opportunities for people to to grow. Find passion in in. Work and find a way of of earning a. Doing what they love doing and that to me is is what's most. You know, I I unfortunately I just had an experience where at the same time that 7th generation was being sold to Unilever and I was feeling really. Good about. I was watching Magic hat, you know, tank and you know it's it's continuing to tank and it's it's probably not going to make it much longer and it. Me really sad. To realise. That that's not living in my legacy. 7th generation. I feel, you know, has been a nice part of my legacy along with Garden Supply Company and I'm just I do have a sadness for the fact that Magic Hat didn't make it.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[Ellen, do you? Because I think I think you are. You're visionary. You've got a vision and you are. You're a dreamer and you've got these incredible ideas.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

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

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

[But. I think you are a stubborn too, right? That fair to say.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

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

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

[A. Little.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[Bit a little bit stubborn. And so maybe that stubbornness. And by the way, I am too. I'm not an easy person to work with. Love my team, but I'm not always. To work with.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

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

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

[I think that sometimes you're a little hard. Work with maybe?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[Oh, I'm really tough. So let me tell you a story that you'll probably like since it relates back to.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

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

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

[How I built this? I'm well aware how difficult I can be. I've gotten less difficult as I've aged, but I'm still difficult.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

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

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

[Umm. And. I'm listening to you had the woman who had a cosmetic company was a Bobby Brown and she was talking about, you know, the sale to the bigger company and how that really allowed her to have a life and still grow the business and how wonderful everything was and.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[Bobby Brown. Sure.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[Then you said. So why did you get out? And she gave the answer that has transformed my view of myself and probably to some degree. I think describes the relationship. You know why Jeffrey and I didn't make it? She. Well, you know what? I realize this at the end of the day, I like being the boss and I was not the boss.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

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

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

[At 7th generation, you know Jeffrey and I both had that role and I think Jeffrey also likes being the boss and I think there was always a friction. When we. Each other, you know, and we really needed each other during the growth spurt. But it ended rough. I wasn't the boss.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[Knowing what you know now and you know having mellowed with age and does. Of you ever. That you that maybe you did a little different and maybe you kind of? Gave a little bit more, accommodated Jeffrey. Or didn't take that sabbatical. I don't. Regret not seeing if you could make it work with Jeffrey.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[I think it was not possible to make it work back in those days and I have thought frequently, and I've even said this publicly, that the shame of it is seven generation would have been much stronger had I stayed and had we both been there 'cause I think.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

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

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

[Were very complimentary. I think we should. Shared a sense of values and I I think 7th generation probably would have been better off. I don't know this for a. Obviously, had we both been there and found a way of working together. That said, I don't know that that's within either one of our DNA.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[Jeffrey, do you does any part of you agree with Alan's assessment that maybe if you would have worked it out and he would have stayed there, 7th generation would have been an even better company?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[Come on.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

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

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

[Certainly think that that's a possibility, but you know who knows? Mean. As I said, I learned a lot from. He's an incredibly talented and capable guy. He had many skills that I didn't have and. You know, in many ways I tried to do the things at 7th generation that I had learned from him. He was a master at creating an incredible culture and community. So you know, who knows how things might have gone had we stayed together? We didn't, so no one will ever know.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[What do you think? Lots of people obviously listen to this show for business ideas and also for guidance. Jeffrey, what do you think somebody should look for on? Co founder.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[Well, first of all, they got to make sure that they want a Co founder. Not for everybody, as Alan has suggested. Some people maybe like him and I are happier being in the leadership role. So if you're going to have a cofounder, I think you need to have a very, very transparent and clear agreement about the relationship, not just who's doing what, but how you handle this agreement. How you handle things that when things go wrong, it's a. I mean it's, you know, to to me in some way. Being married is like having a partner. And it takes a tremendous amount of work. So you know I I think if. Not prepared to do the work. You shouldn't get into the relationship.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[You. You know, I agree with a lot of what Jeffrey said. Think that my most success? Partnership was with with Bob Johnson with Magic Hat. He clearly recognized that I was the lead dog. I had the experience I was putting in the money and then at the end of the day I was going to make critical decisions. The other side of it was we had very complementary skills. He just wanted to be a Brewer. He just wanted to make great beer. And my interest was growing the business and so we never stepped on each others toes and I think it's critical if there are Co founders. I think that having written agreements on what the roles are and. Whose responsibility things are are really critical. Go and as things change to update that, I think it's really important because at the end. Day you really need to be on the same page.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

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

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

[You know Jeffrey. I've been meaning to ask because we mentioned earlier that in. The 16 seventh generation was was acquired by Unilever and at that time you were actually invited by Unilever to return to the board. I think this is like 5 or 6 years after your ouster. Were you surprised?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[I was very surprised, very surprised, thrilled, but very surprised, yeah.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[Anybody on the board who was also on the board when you ran it?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[There were a couple of people who were on the board briefly, but cycled off pretty quickly and it was a little awkward, quite honestly, but there were also some incredibly wonderful people who were new along with me. And it was. It was a terrific experience and it's been a terrific experience and I. I have had a unique opportunity to sort of continue to shepherd my legacy with Unilever in a way that I never imagined. I'd have the opportunity to do.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[Yeah, Jeffrey, when you think about the journey you've had and all of the ups and downs and the incredible successes and challenges and how much of this do you attribute to your business acumen, hard work and how much do you think happened because you got lucky and you? Of rode the wave wave. Of the natural foods revolution.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[Well, there's no question that you have to be a little lucky to be. I don't think anyone is successful without a fair measure of luck, but I I attribute a lot of my success to my unwillingness to give up to no matter what challenge I'm facing, no matter how things. How bad things? I'm glad that I have have not given up. Up and I've stuck with it and if you don't have that passion, if you don't have that love for what you're doing, you will make it through the hard times. You won't be around to experience the luck that might be waiting out there for you.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[Alan Luck, skill. Hard work what do you think?](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[Well, three, you know, I got lucky numerous. I got lucky when I took a job at gardens for all that took me on a ride and really taught me the the catalog business, which then took me on my next ride.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

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

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

[Through 7th generation and neither one of those was planned, you know. Were they lucky? Don't. I was in. I was in play so I had the opportunity to see the opportunities and say yes to them and then I think you make your own luck. I think once you say yes and and. Jeff's ability to continue, I mean, it's one of the things that I always marvel at. You know when. Things were looked impossible. Jeffrey would just dig in and grunt through them. That causes luck to happen to you because you stay in play and it's your ability to climb those mountains, and then when you see an opportunity to be able to move on those opportunities, which other people would then call luck.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

[That's Alan Newman and Jeffrey Hollander, cofounders of 7th generation. These days, Jeffrey still has a seat on the board and is also the CEO of the American Sustainable Business Council. As for Alan. He's busy with a number of small ventures, including a live music venue in Burlington called Arts Riot. It's been closed during the pandemic, but he hopes to open up later this year. And the. For the place, it's actually pretty catchy. Destroy apathy. Hey, thanks so much for listening to the show this week. And while you're with us, please do take a moment to subscribe to this podcast. If you want to write to us, our e-mail address is hiba@npr.org. If you want to follow us on Twitter, it's at how I built this or I'm at Guy Raz and my Instagram is at guy dot Ros.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

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

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

[This episode was produced by Casey Herman, with music composed by Ramtin Arablouei. Thanks also to Ferrara Safari, Liz Metzger, Darrell Gales, JC Howard, Julia cart. The grant and Jeff Rogers, our intern, is Janet Ujung Lee. I'm guy. And you've been listening to how I built this.](https://1drv.ms/u/s!ACuE0Z-4JoB_gUU)

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

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

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

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