

By [Jeff Alpen](#)

This story is about my ongoing quest to find good experiences and take those experiences and have them shape how I relate to and serve our clients.

It begins with the [Chinook Book](#) of which I am a big fan and supporter. I like it for three reasons. First, I love flipping through and clipping coupons that lead me to new products and services or save me \$1.00 on products I believe in. The second great aspect of the Chinook Book is the way in which they support organizations as a fundraising tool. We've used the books (+ app) for the past three years to raise thousands of dollars for our girls' school. Finally, the people working in the local Seattle office are awesome, supportive, and make it easy to fundraise, which in turn has me wanting to help them. I put the Chinook Book in the good user experience category.



Eat Local

This leads to an experience I had about three weeks ago at **Eat Local**. I had looked at the coupon many times and seen their store on top of Queen Anne but never really investigated or found out what they do. Never would I have guessed that a trip to the store in downtown Seattle would be such a good experience. I strolled up to the store at lunch and was quickly met by the retail associate. He gave me a tour of the store, pointed out a few key dishes, and then offered me a sample of the borscht and nut loaf. While engaged with the associate, I had noticed a somewhat curious onlooker and listener and turned and approached him while my samples were being prepared. As I suspected, Greg was the founder and owner of Eat Local.

By the time my samples arrived, Greg and I were deep into a conversation about why he started

the company, the food, business, brand, and what he was aiming to do. In reflection on our conversation I thought about how inspired I am by good people and good businesses with real products. His mission is to change the way frozen, prepared meals are made and sold. Since that experience, I have become evangelical of Eat Local, bought a membership, and made a couple of trips in for lunch. I know it is not a fine dining experience but my meeting of the people behind the business certainly elevated my perception and the value that I would attribute to them.

The final awesome experience I've had in the past couple of weeks was meeting Barefoot Ted. If you haven't read the book [Born to Run](#), it is worth a read and features Barefoot Ted, whom many would credit with creating awareness for the recent barefoot running phenomena. In addition, he is the creator and proprietor behind [Luna Sandals](#), which is the product which enabled me to meet Barefoot Ted.

Having finally exploded my Montrail sandals, I was due for a new pair and thought I'd try something utilitarian and fitting for a trip to Mexico that might involve some exercise and certainly warm weather. Luna has a small boutique on the second floor of a building that also serves as their factory. I decided I would pop in on my way home from work one evening. I walked into the shop, poked my head into the factory, and was greeted by the team and approached by Barefoot Ted. For the next 45 minutes we engaged in a wide-ranging conversation that started with the story behind the products and into Ted's belief system that is centered here: "Human body is the embodied vehicle, the tool through which we can use to self-experiment our way into greater health and happiness." And I most certainly bought a pair of sandals. Another good user experience.

All three of the companies named above have delivered beyond my expectation and created within me a strong desire to support them and to share their stories. I come to work every day aiming to provide clients and colleagues with the feeling I received from Greg, Ted, and the Chinook Book team. If they (I) do, I know I've done my job.

Jeff is Canadian, a father of two, a swimmer, a biker, a kombucha drinker, a lover of the outdoors, always striving to "be here now," and likely the first person you will meet at Blink.