



Tino's Corner

Papa Tony & Camel's

by Tino Mantella, President & CEO TLG

Most of us enjoy storytelling and great storytellers. One of my earliest memories is at about age 4 sitting on my grandfather's lap and he would tell me stories. Papa Tony was a bit of a chain smoker and to make matters just a bit worse he smoked Camel's. The good news is that he finally quit and lived a long and fruitful life.

So how did Camel's come into my story? Well the prop for all my grandfather's stories was the cigarette pack that he happened to be smoking (*at this point in my writing I had to check with Google to see if there were different stories on the back of the packs and I didn't find anything on that...Papa was just a good storyteller*). Every time I sat with Papa, I would ask him to read a story and he would pull out his pack and turn it over to the side with the camel on it and act as if he was reading from it. I suppose it never registered to me that the pack was small, and his stories were long. Anyway, we went to faraway places and in great depth. He brought the stories to life. Some of my best memories with my grandfather were those stories.

One of my favorite books of all times is Angela's Ashes by Frank McCourt. Don't read it or watch the movie, pick it up on Audible or another means to listen to it. Since the book came out in 1996, I am guessing I listened to it, in the car, on a cassette. I was working for the Chicago YMCA at the time and I remember listening as I was driving back and forth to the City from and to Naperville. I never wanted the ride to stop. I would laugh, cry, and be totally into McCourt's journey.

In business, the great storytellers, with substance behind them, can go a long way to conjure up sincere emotion. There is a distinction between BSers who you can see a mile away and people that use stories to get important points across. In sales, most in the field can state the business case – here is our product and this is why you want to buy it from me....right now... It's much more difficult to think about the audience and truly understand their need and how the product or service may help them.

In this fast-paced Twitter world it's getting much more difficult to find the storytellers. The genuine folks that are passionate about their story and genuine in their desire to convey it for a great purpose are the diamonds in the world. I am glad to see that so many people are talking about stories in relation to leadership. And, I am particularly happy that Rick Stone's company is partnering with TLG to help us bring stories to our current and future clients.

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