



WHEN OUR PAST BECOMES OUR FUTURE

As an author, my writings have, in the main, dealt with mental health issues and the mysteries of the human mind. Although it might appear that I am diverting from that theme in this article, I believe that there is a real emotional and intellectual connection nevertheless. This story was related to me by my mother many years ago involving her coming to the United States with her parents from the Isle of Sicily. But first, let me relate just a little background.

My mother was an only child born to two people who decided to come to the land whose “streets were lined in gold.” My mother was about thirteen years old. Her father was considered a *patrone* or someone who had gained status in his community. She reported that he oversaw the operation of a brick making factory and rode atop a white palomino horse as he performed his duties. Apparently, he had an addiction to using “coarse, salty language” and his reputation followed him. In other words, he used profanity like a “drunken sailor.”

Their departure occurred during World War I and their crossing the Atlantic was a harrowing experience. The deep waters were laden with German mines necessitating that a very careful route be taken by the ship’s captain. She reported hearing gun and canon fire in the distance which made her and her family’s emotions peak even more so. During what I presume to be a very frightening period aboard ship, with everyone crammed into very small spaces, my grandfather made a vow that if he and his family reached the shores of the new land safely, he would never use profane language again.

Obviously, they reached our shores safely, landing at Ellis Island which was the usual landing for Europeans emigrating to this Country. After the gangplank was lowered allowing the immigrants to deploy, he walked down to *terra firma*, knelt down and kissed the ground. My mother reported that she never again heard him speak another swear word until the day of his death some years later. My memory of my grandparents is very slim since I was very young when they deceased. I believe that I missed the great opportunity being with two people who were reported to be very gentle and loving.

And now, the scene changes to the year 2000 when my wife and I decided to travel to Italy for the centennial celebration and an audience with then Pope John Paul. Of course our audience was shared with thousands of other pilgrims but it was a very moving

experience nevertheless. Although this was our primary motive for the trip, the secondary motive for me was equally important. That motive was to travel to Sicily and to the town of Vallelunga where my parents were born. We ferried from the mainland to the Island and stayed in a hotel in Messina. While at the front desk, I was looking through the phone book and found two “Bonasera” names in the town of Vallelunga which peaked my interest.

We traveled the sharp and frightening “S” curves through the mountains, often without any roadside barriers preventing disaster, for over three hours before reaching our destination. The town was “announced” by a sign with its name surrounded by overgrown weeds. I left the car, walked to the sign, knelt down and kissed the ground with tears in my eyes while saying a silent prayer. And now, the circle of life was complete. I found one relative married to the mayor the town who graciously invited us into their home for a wonderful visit that culminated our experience. Truly my past had become my future.

A Brief Biographical Sketch

After an over 40 year career as a professional psychotherapist and Director of The Sports Stress Clinic in Amherst, NY, Charles Bonasera came to Florida and decided to use the benefits of his previous professional experiences in his new roles of Consultant in Life Management and Business Coaching as well as his expertise as a Motivational Speaker. He once again became involved with athletes in different sports training them with his techniques to help them develop and maintain focus as well as staying in their zone. Much of his training methods are derived from the CD collection he developed under the heading of WIN-WIN SECRETS as the President of Personal Identity Controls. This collection consists of thirty-six programs dealing with vital issues in the management of stress.

Another role that he adopted to add to his professional career was that of Author. Early in the 1980’s he wrote Guide to a Life Management Process which he has re-written as a workbook to successfully help people manage their stress which includes his own Working Model. As a result in his interest in golf and realizing that it was essentially a “mind game”, he wrote The Mental Side of Golf which can benefit the beginner as well as professionals playing the game of golf.

He then compiled over five-hundred sayings that he had developed in the course of his professional career as stimuli to help people change patterns in their lives entitled How to Stay Well and Live Life to the Fullest. This was followed by a book documenting case studies around disruptive life patterns including ways to change them under the name of How in the Hell Did This Happen to Me? Both his personal involvement in sports as a participant, coach, manager and in his role in officiating, inspired him to write a primer for parents and coaches entitled The Legend of Little League.

Charles invites you to view his website at www.charlesmbonasera.com as well as to write with your comments and questions to his e-mail address

(charles@charlesmbonasera.com). He would also be very happy to communicate with his readers by telephone should they desire. His professional motto is “seeking alternative methods to happiness” and wishes those touched by his words to practice the three secrets to a happy life: “enjoy life and enjoy it thoroughly ... develop and maintain a sense of humor ... bring as much love into your life as possible.