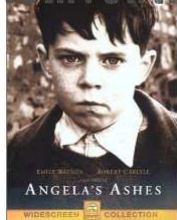


Reinventing Yourself



Recently and again, I had an opportunity to visit with Geoff Currier on The Nighthawk,

CJOB's evening show. Geoff asked me to join him in a discussion of how some people manage to re-invent themselves and he used the example of Frank McCourt the author of Angela's Ashes to start things off.

As a Life & Business Coach my work with clients is all about reinvention but perhaps not in the way you may think.

The idea that a person can actually reinvent themselves, that is turn themselves into someone or something else entirely, is one that I believe to be widely misunderstood and I

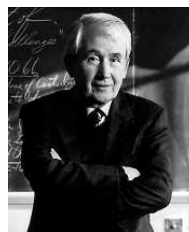


explained my position. The huge misconception out there is this; reinventing oneself is not about changing into someone or something else, something new or entirely different but rather it is about "living life from the place of who you truly are – your most authentic inner self," (Nancy Fox). In other words we, all of us, are on a journey through life of self-discovery and if as we travel we make an effort to move forward in positive ways that are congruent with our values and needs, we will find and

live out our life purpose, what we were truly meant to do or to be.

"I absolutely believe this to be one of life's greatest truths!"

For those who may not know, Frank McCourt after surviving a horrific childhood in Ireland and the United States, went on to serve in the US Army during the Korean War and upon his return took advantage of the GI Bill to attend New York University and become a teacher.



For the next 30 years he taught English to young people primarily in high school until he retired at the age of 66 and wrote Angela's Ashes in 1996. It was an immediate success and he won the Pulitzer Prize. He then went on to write two other books; 'Tis and Teacher Man.' He died in July of 2009.

Was this a case of a man reinventing himself, I think not but rather it was the culmination of a journey toward his "life Purpose." And he arrived at just the right time to begin his writing.

One must never discount or downplay the journey toward "purpose" but embrace, enjoy and experience it as fully as possible. Remember too that more times than not, others are involved in our journey which makes us a part of their journey, so make it positive. In Frank McCourt's case the hundreds of students he guided along

[next page.....](#)

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the way as their teacher. I wonder how he affected their lives.

* * * * *

Driving home after the show I found myself wondering about people I knew, who had made significant changes in the way they were operating in the world and then it hit me and I was overwhelmed with emotion by the thought of my oldest son Chris.

Chris was in so many ways a typical boy that is at least for his first 10 years and then something changed, in a way that I could never have anticipated in my wildest dreams. At his request it started with buying him a guitar and setting him up in guitar lessons. He never looked back.

To say that Chris took to the guitar like a duck to water was an understatement. He never missed a lesson and never needed to be reminded to practice, in fact had to be pulled away to attend to other activities to try and keep some balance in his life. It wasn't long before it seemed that he disappeared into the basement to focus on his music. After a number of years I began to wonder if he would ever come out I would throw food down on occasion so that he would not starve, even sneak down after he was asleep to do his laundry. Other shady looking characters with long hair and guitars would come and go and every once in a while, if the music stopped, I would yell just to check to see that he was still alive!

This seemed to go on for the better part of 9 years and then one day he came up out of the basement and said to me; "dad me and the guys have formed a band and are going to start playing out!" He called the band; "Bent Outta Shape."



It becomes much of a blur after that but for the most part I recall many years of great memories following him and the guys around, listening and watching them play. I loved it! Yes, I became a groupie, video-taped my son as he grew and developed as a musician.

I have to admit though as much as I enjoyed it there was always this worry in the back of my mind because of what I came to know in my travels about the world of Rock and Roll that I might lose my son to drugs. I watched a number of his friends and other musicians who did lose that battle.

Fast forward to Chris in his 30's and what do I see, my son graduating from university with his first degree and a gold medal in history. He is now into his second year of Education and will graduate a teacher in the spring of

2010. And he can still be seen practicing his guitar everyday.

From my vantage point my son was on the road to becoming a starving musician for the rest of his life. Needless to say I was very anxious for him but in retrospect I need not have been. Thank god he knew what he was doing, over those early years. According to his process not mine, he was finding his true path even if it seemed like; "the road less traveled."

Did he reinvent himself; I think not but rather is following his path to a congruence with his values and needs.

What Chris's life purpose will finally be I cannot know but I have absolutely no doubt now that based upon being around to observe his journey to this point in time my wonderful son who I love will find it in his own good time.

That is the way it can be, should be for all of us. Is there congruence in your life?

I would love to get your feedback send me an e-mail with your thoughts or story;
james@coachladd.com

Coach Ladd

"Life is a process of becoming, a combination of states we have to go through. Where people fail is that they wish to elect a state and remain in it. This is a kind of death." Anais Nin



Most people can look back over the years and identify a time and place at which their lives changed significantly. Whether by accident or design, these are the moments when, because of a readiness within us and a collaboration with events occurring around us, we are forced to seriously reappraise ourselves and the conditions under which we live and to make certain choices that will affect the rest of our lives.

Frederick F. Flack:

You may wonder, 'How can I leave it all behind if I am just coming back to it? How can I make a new beginning if I simply return to the old?' The answer lies in the return. You will not come back to the 'same old thing.' What you return to has changed because you have changed. Your perceptions will be altered. You will not incorporate into the same body, status, or world you left behind. The river has been flowing while you were gone. Now it does not look like the same river.

[The Book of the Vision Quest]

Steven Foster

An entrepreneur's wings are clipped, but his fall from grace reveals his true purpose...

The Story of OZZ **Banks are People too**

Written by John Pineau, MCP -
www.OZZmediacorp.com



OZZ began by writing a fiction, a story about a guy robbed by a Bank.

This is the real story.

In the Beginning

I've often wondered why we're put here, if each of us has some higher purpose to serve, if our failures are lessons to be learned that prepare us for some greater existence after we move on. But when it really comes down to it, I can't subscribe to that theory, not totally anyway. I'm too impatient. Who wants to wait until his last breath before finding out if there really is a pay off for life's disappoints? No thank you. I'm getting it done this time around.

By done, I mean I want to leverage a horrible period in my life to help others realize they aren't the only ones to have suffered, and that despite how illogical things may be, there is always

a purpose to it. My purpose is clear to me now. My purpose is to establish an outlet for people to make their lives better. A tall order I know. But when you've been through tough times and survived, anything seems possible.

With that said I don't want to give anyone the impression that I've suffered worse than the next guy. There are millions worse off than I am. But I can say that no one has lived my life and frankly, I'm not sure a lot of people would have wanted to. I can say that it was the sequence of events, the kind of events, and the creatures involved that made my story unique. And I can say that without having experienced this period of my life there is no way I would have conceived what OZZ has become.

Mine is a bizarre story that parallels a lot of the things going on in the world right now. Normally the guy robs the Bank, like a John Dillinger kind of thing. But this was the opposite. A Bank robbed me, and based on the news reports we're all seeing, I'm not the only one.

The Big Shift

It was 1994. After working as a Community Planner for an engineering firm, I decided to leave the profession to pursue my entrepreneurial dreams. The opportunity happened to be a jazz nightclub on the west coast of Canada. It was an incredible success, other than the fact it burned to the ground. The insurance company reimbursed us for only part of our losses,



which created an enormous gap in our cash flow. Despite the fact I worked tirelessly to rebuild the club into a cash-flow success again, my shareholders got really weird, forcing us into a court battle for the business.

During that time my father died of a heart attack at 57. I was emotionally crippled but still available to fight.

The "shareholders" won the battle but I won the war. After selling my shares they destroyed the club, a double-edged sword of justice I would rather not have witnessed. I remember being so angry I couldn't sleep but hey, little did we know the worst was yet to come.



The "worst" came in the form of a beer-drinking hangout I built from the ground up. The business was an awesome success, winning best New Restaurant in the city's top newspaper in its first year. Line-ups were commonplace, in part because of location (it was right in downtown Vancouver) but as far as I was concerned the really ugly, big stuffed beaver we placed in the middle of the bar had a lot to do with it.

The business was real, unlike the people who robbed it blind.



Banks are People too

People have asked me why I would want to write this story. Others came right out and told me to let it go, move on, put it behind you, sun comes tomorrow kind of thing. I chose to keep going, early on perhaps in part because of my stubbornness, but mostly because as I wrote it, I realized how unique these events were, and that I was experiencing something most people don't experience in three life times.

As time moved forward to today, I watch the news and realize the parallels between my story and what is occurring. Millions of people have lost their jobs, their homes and most of the blame is being laid on the Banks. Back in 2001 we lost everything – including this wonderful bar - because a Bank robbed it. The Bank was a national pillar of the community type institution that I was brought up to trust, but in the end, the Bank decided to play the "we have lots of lawyers" game because they had 5 billion dollars in assets and all I had was a big stuffed beaver and lots of beer.

When you operate a business you hire a Bank to administer your "operating" account. All funds earned are

deposited into this account. Bills are paid. Everyone's happy. But this situation was different. It seemed the Bank's account manager decided that authorizing checks, big fat ones, was acceptable without my signing authority, which is not very nice because I was the company's only signing authority.

I remember the Account Manager avoiding me when I approached her to discuss the matter. I could tell immediately that something strange was going on but it took a while to connect the dots so to speak. I dug around, asked questions, and after several failed attempts to secure a meeting with the Account Manager, I unveiled some pretty interesting facts. I was able to find evidence of fraud and something called "Kyting". Kyting occurs when a Bank insider holds checks for a while to enable the float time required to make whatever kind of deal scumbags make for a short term financial return. Keep in mind these checks weren't properly authorized in the first place. An Onsite Manager I had hired signed each.

The most telling piece of the puzzle involved a triangle of sorts, a relationship amongst the Bank's Account Manager, an Onsite Manager signing the checks without the authority to do so, and the Account Manager's husband, who happened to be a Lawyer and the drinking buddy of my Onsite Manager. It appeared this little love triangle had been



going on for some time. Twice before my Onsite Manager and this particular Bank had been sued for similar not very nice stuff. The Lawyer on record was you guessed it, the husband of the Account Manager and the drinking buddy of my Onsite Manager.

Enter dramatic music.

After sending a pile of evidence to the Chairman in the Bank's Toronto head office I received a call from this Bank's internal investigations department. I met shortly afterward with a fairly senior Banker in the Bank's fancy downtown Vancouver offices. After admitting fault the Bank asked for an offer. I followed with an offer in writing, an offer they apparently didn't like. A few weeks later I received a letter from the Bank denying any liability in the case. Funny how time changes perspectives when the light shines on us.

I filed a lawsuit against the Bank confident in the knowledge that justice would prevail. During this time all kinds of creatures made their way into my life. Almost predictable were the two goons who showed up looking for the meat guy's money. Their English wasn't all that good but they got their point across. Oddly enough they were Canadians and their English should have been better but hey, consider the source. Unpredictable were the guys who showed up in suits to utter idle threats about the conflict between my company and the Bank. "You don't know who you're screwing with," one

of them told me. "People who sue the Bank quite often disappear."

Oddly enough it was the Bank's account manager who disappeared, apparently "reassigned" to one of their branches in Ottawa. I later learned that this sort of thing was commonplace during these kinds of cases. The Bank clearly knew she was guilty – admitting to me during the Vancouver meeting that it recognized the "association" amongst the account manager, her husband and my onsite manager – but the Bank couldn't fire her, well aware of the optical damage it would cause if the case went to court. Better to ship her off to a basement job somewhere far away, making it difficult and costly for me to serve her as a witness. If I ever got to that point, the Bank's lawyers would insist to the judge that we pick up her airfare, hotel and per diem, making it as costly as possible for me to get here there. Typical stuff apparently.

In the end, none of this mattered. I didn't disappear, I just ran out of steam. Despite the fact the evidence overwhelmingly favored the truth, the Bank's lawyers were fatter than mine, and after throwing their weight around I realized what a waste of time it was to go head-on with such a powerful institution. Reluctantly, and after a long fight to keep the business afloat,

I decided to move on. My young family and I were left penniless and bankrupt. Lots of good people lost their money.

After licking my wounds repeatedly my tongue got sore so I moved my family away to start a new life. Time passed, slowly, as I worked to re-establish my credibility, which tends to happen when you're recovering from personal bankruptcy. We had little money and as if the situation wasn't bad enough, I lost my mother around that

time to a bizarre lung disease at the age of 62. We were told that it had been caused by of all things, her budgie. To this day, no one knows the truth but that's another story.

I remember sitting in the basement of the house we were living in at the time. The landlord had just popped in to pick up his rent, the booze on his breath so strong I had to step back a few inches. When you bankrupt – whether due to mismanagement of your finances or because a bank has robbed you - you exist in the bankruptcy prison of shame for nine months until your trustee sets you free. You get to function in society without a credit card, without a credit line - without credibility. People judge you like your some kind of sub-human so you get to live in a shit hole owned by a drunken landlord.

Good times. My parents were dead and thanks to the Bank, my



life was a disaster. Good times.

And Then Came the Network

There is no worse feeling in life than powerlessness, especially in the face of such an obvious injustice. But I found solace in writing during these years. At first I just wrote, recording everything I could about my experience. I didn't have a clue why I was writing it or where I was going to put it, but I knew it would serve a purpose at some point in my life, that my bizarre string of bad luck would make sense later in life as negative experiences always do.



My work developed into a novel called *Beer, the book*. *Beer, the book* is a fiction about a guy who gets robbed by a bank, and another guy, a much older one, whose greed is ultimately responsible for it. *Beer, the book* was a lot of work, and though it represented such an important part of my life, I knew on some level that it was only the beginning, a springboard of sorts.

After scratching my head for a while, several years and hundreds of versions to be precise, I formed the OZZ media network, and not unlike *Beer, the book*, I wasn't sure what it would become. But then slowly, after many more iterations, I saw how it could

serve to bring others into the equation. In the end, which is really the beginning, the OZZ media network is an imperfect, evolving mobile broadcaster that will be shaped by contributors from the around the world. It is a storytelling forum to sell products as much as it is a place to share philosophies.

Beer, the book will be available on the network very soon. The OZZ media network is available now to serve as a forum for all kinds to tell their story.

My story is *Beer, the Book*. My purpose is the OZZ media network. I guess these creations are my hope too. I hope they bring you to share yours. www.OZZmedianetwork.com

John Pineau is an entrepreneur who brings life to visions. His experience in both the business and the creative worlds enables perspectives to enrich initiatives, giving projects the energy and focus to succeed.

John earned a Masters Degree in City Planning from the University of Manitoba, Faculty of Architecture. Mr. Pineau was recognized with the annual Award of Merit by his peers and was certified by the Canadian Institute of Planners. Mr. Pineau owned and operated his own businesses in media production, hospitality, and tourism for the better part of his career. John has advised companies in aviation, tourism and enterprise software.

Mr. Pineau was Co-Producer of the award-winning hockey movie *The Rhino Brothers* (top independent at WorldFest, Houston, TX). He was Scriptwriter for the Gregorash Aviation Video Stories, Author of its Cover Story and Singer/Songwriter for its Soundtrack - www.OZZmedianetwork.com. He is a poet having published works regarding life in his hometown, of Winnipeg, and was founder of a first class jazz night club and award winning restaurant, bar on the west coast of Canada.

People are always blaming their circumstances for what they are. I don't believe in circumstances. The people who get on in this world are the people who get up and look for the circumstances they want, and if they can't find them make them."

George Bernard Shaw

Everyone at some point will suffer a loss ~ the loss of loved ones, good health, a job. It's your desert experience - a time of feeling barren of options, even hope. The important thing is not to allow yourself to be stranded in the desert. -

Patrick Del Zoppo,

We do not grow absolutely, chronologically. We grow sometimes in one dimension, and not in another; unevenly. We grow partially. We are relative. We are mature in one realm, childish in another. The past, present, and future mingle and pull us backward, forward, or fix us in the present. We are made up of layers, cells, constellations.

Anais Nin

