



Infomail

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Happy Fathers Day! A Tribute to a Father

Gino Finucci was born in the little village (population 1200) of Aielli, Italy in 1932. From an early age, the theme of hard work was instilled in him. By the age of nine he was tending the sheep herd against predators and when not looking after that he was ploughing fields with Oxen plough. Although he barely had a grade 4/5 education, he learned to be savvy and street smart, first during the Nazi occupation, followed by the Allies and their dive bombers.

He left his parents behind and immigrated to Canada in 1953. No understanding of English, no welfare, and no employment. He was one of the many Italians who helped build the Sir Adam Beck Power Station in Niagara Falls, where he eventually settled down and where I was born and raised.

Family was job #1 to my Father and often he would go without so his family would not. My Father was a quiet man who minded his own business, spoke little but when he did you paid attention. The neighborhood kids were terrified of him. I know growing up if you seriously messed up I would meet my maker in a hurry. I was more scared of my Dad than I was of the police. I think they call it tough love nowadays.

My Father was a very serious, humble, tough, tough, tough man, but was a calming force. He had a temper, one quality I definitely inherited from him. He taught my brother and me about making good choices in any given situation. There was only two ways to do things in his mantra: The right way, and the wrong way.

My Dad worked hard.....all the time. He never sat still, constantly finding projects to do. Due to scarcity during the war, he learned to create and improvise in ways beyond the human imagination. He could do everything from plumbing to auto repair, to electrical and carpentry. He was street smart and always thought ahead.

He lived simply and never wanted for anything and never ever asked for recognition. He worked hard but never for material things. He never once in his life bought himself anything, a fancy car, toys, expensive clothes, etc....Never once. Many people still don't believe me when I tell them at age 78 he never had a credit card. My Dad never did a selfish thing in his entire life.

Unlike too many people today, my Father never worried about what he didn't have, only about what he had.

Integrity was a main stay of my Father. His word was his bond, his handshake was good and all you needed. He showed up early for everything, I never ever remember him being late even once.

My Father never went to mass or church, but he insisted that his kids did.

He loved his garden. Oh did he love his garden. It was one of his children and it was a productive one. He proudly gave away its bounty. If he gave you some of his produce, it meant he liked you. Like a good Italian, he and my Mother made excellent wine, sausage, tomato sauce, etc... Opera and classical music was always playing in our home and he passed that love of music to my brother and me. Thanks for that Pa, it was a great gift.

He retired in 1991 after a long career at Ontario Paper, a pulp and paper mill in Thorold and helped run the family restaurant Oochi's for many years, again working two jobs at the same time. He was a very proud Italian, and never forgot his roots but was just as proud Canadian and ever thankful for the opportunity this Country provided. Remember, these people left a war torn country to come to a strange land with no social back stops, just a will to work hard.

As serious and tough as he could be, my Dad could have quite a sense of humour.

My Father was far from perfect as we all are. He never once came to watch me play any of the many sports I played. I never held it against him, that's just the way he was. He just believed that time was better spent studying for school or going to work to earn. Education wasn't a choice for us, it was mandatory. It was the ticket to a better life. I'm still taking courses today and as usual, he was right.

My Dad's value system was built around family, hard work and integrity. I believe many of those value have been lost or misplaced and that may be the root cause of many of today's issues we face: Greedy CEO's, unethical businessmen, and simply too many people living well beyond their means with an entitlement mentality, worried only about themselves and "appearances".

My Dad passed away April 27th. This is my first Father's Day without him and I miss and think about him every single day. I still hear him giving me advice. I loved him very much, but I respected him even more.

The last thing my Dad told me was that with his limited education he had, he did the best he could. The last thing I told him was he did a good job with us. That would have made him very happy.

Because of how he did so much with so little, I feel I should do even better given my opportunities, thanks to my parent's sacrifices. I'm doing the best to do that.

Sunday June 17th is Father's Day – If your Dad is still with you, make sure you call and thank him for everything he's done. Even better, if you can, go see him and give him a big hug and tell him in person. If your Dad is gone, I'm sure he'd love to hear from you in a quiet word. I'll be visiting my Dad in Niagara.

Happy Father's Day to all!

Vito Finucci
Vice President & Director
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