

Hot • Strong • Freshly brewed

Coffee Stories



by **Lifebushido**

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Introduction

There is nothing better than getting that daily fix of Cappuccino at your local coffee house. You order up, sit down, and take your first sip of that smooth yet invigorating cup of the hot stuff before moving onto other things like finishing the first chapter of the book you bought the night before or opening your laptop to connect with Wi-Fi or Twitter.

No matter how focused you are on your task, your eyes and ears soon begin to migrate across the room. Before long, you are drawn into the world of people watching and eaves dropping. You realize that your local coffee shop is more than just a convenient place to go for your daily fix of caffeine; there are lots of wonderful things happening to the people around you.

People fall in love, get their first big career break, meet celebrities, forge lasting friendships and land book deals with major publishers after scribbling a few notes on a napkin.

Serendipitous moments happen all around you while you sip that mug of java and people watch. People are discovered, scouted, wooed, schmoozed, matched and headhunted. You wonder, why doesn't someone put these magical moments in a book?

Coffee Stories is a book about just that. It is a collection of stories about great things that happened to people in their local coffee shops around the world. As you read, you become the fly on the wall - watching and listening to people's dreams, discoveries, romances and fantasies.

If you love people watching, eaves dropping, or even have a secret fantasy or two about the waiter serving you your Americano, then you will fall in love with this book. Be sure to take it down to your local coffee shop and order-up before reading. Perhaps you are just one page away from creating your own story.

See www.Lifebushido.com/Coffee or email Coffee@Lifebushido.com for more stories or to join us.

Stories

My sister and I are real coffee lovers. We buy green coffee beans over the internet and roast them ourselves. However, we love the lattes at Starbucks and have one whenever we are out shopping. She is a stay-at-home mom who makes candles and soaps and sells them over the internet. We got to talking one day over our Starbucks lattes after shopping the day after Thanksgiving. We were talking about the value of coffee butter for the skin. We decided to go together and start making coffee butter soaps and coffee flavored lip balm. We make up a few batches that week and sold a bunch of them over the holidays. They were some of her best sellers for the season. The lip balms taste just like coffee and are so moisturizing that we had several reorders after the season! Evidently, everyone is tired of all of the soaps and lip balms that smell like flowers or fruits - and these were great gifts for the guys, too!

Great ideas happen over coffee! Last summer I spent a month in small town across the country from where I grew up. I was visiting family and didn't know anyone there. Every day, while my cousins all went to work, I sat in the local coffee shop and wrote. By the end of the summer, I had a bunch of new friends and a plan to start a new business when I got home. Now here I am; I still have those friends and all plans are a go for that business!

Over a cup of coffee (well, two cups of coffee and a cup of chai - there were three people involved), I learned that I am an intelligent person capable of communicating in complex and interesting ways with people who I thought were my intellectual superiors. I can explain and justify my views, I can outline my plans, and I can also learn and reflect in order to get past the bumps in the road toward a dissertation. Over a cup of coffee, I found that my ideas are important and that I can, and will, finish this PhD and what I say will matter!

I was going through some really bad times at 17. I had been through three foster homes and two group homes and was ready to give up. I was drinking a lot and just wasn't being a normal teenager. Then a friend told me that I needed to check out the local coffee shop in town. I always figured that coffee shops were for people older than me, but I loved cappuccinos so I figured that I would give it a shot, and I am so glad I did. I met the owner of the shop, and he wanted to have a place for people like me to come and get their lives straightened up. By the time I was done with my first cup of coffee, I had three new friends and enrolled in the alcohol and drug group that he had. I went to that coffee shop every day until I moved a year later, and it saved my life. I cleaned up

my act, had a great support system, and got A's in school. I will never forget my times there. Over the years the name has changed, but that feeling I had won't.

The best thing that happened to me at a coffee house was that I found a job. I was drinking some coffee and looking for jobs on the internet when a man asked what kind of job I was looking for. I explained my job position to him and gave him my email address. He said he would check around with his friends. Never thinking of ever hearing from him again, I received an email from him and eventually it led to a job.

Several years ago I was sitting in a cafe in Paris reading the International Herald Tribune. Although my French is almost good enough to pass for native, this must have been the flag that shouted, "Here is an American." In any event, a total stranger came to sit at my table and after an initial hesitation on my part, we started to talk. He turned out to be a really interesting person; an American who had spent years doing humanitarian work for the United Nations. For all the headlines of the 1990's and 2000's, this guy had been there, seen the movie, wore the t-shirt and one could even say had written the book. Places like Goma, Kigali, Indonesia were more familiar to him than his hometown. We spent a few hours and several coffees talking about his life and career and then went our own ways. I was so buzzed, more by the conversation than by the coffee, that I only remembered well after I returned to my hotel that I had left my IHT on the table. The conversation never really left me even after I returned to New York. Every time I read about some new humanitarian disaster in the papers, I looked at what I was doing in the finance management company for which I was working and asked myself why. Why slowly transformed itself into the question how. Almost a year later, I decided that if I was going to change careers this was the time to do it and I began to look for jobs overseas with the UN or a large non-governmental organization. It turned out that the degree that I had in Business Administration was not irrelevant to this task. After a few false starts, I was offered a post of Operations Officer with a UN Agency. I have been in Senegal for over a year now and frankly have never looked back.

I met a sweet guy in a coffee house on my college campus. He offered to help me with chemistry homework. After being friends for months, we fell in love. We have been married for over forty years! The place is still a coffee house, and we still enjoy going back there. Lots of warm fuzzies there for us!

I met my wife on a blind date at a coffee house of her choosing in Palo Alto, CA. We sat and chatted over coffee ... a day later I found out she doesn't like coffee. Nine years later she still doesn't like coffee.

I met my best friend in a coffee house. I had just moved to another state and I didn't know people there. He was the owner of the coffee house and he made me feel like family. We ended up falling in love. Like I said, he is my best friend and now my husband. It was meant to be - my move, and I found my soul mate. I'm the happiest person alive!

Coffee houses in my opinion are a great way to reconnect with old friends and stay in touch with current ones. When I was younger and involved in a church youth group, my friends and I used to hang out at a coffee house and catch up on what was new. We went through some hard times, losing parents, dropping out of school, trying new jobs and lifestyles but yet when one of us had something going on, we always knew where to go if we needed each other the Coffee Xchange. I remember when my Mom passed away. the call was made and everyone just kind of showed up there that night, we all knew we needed each other and we knew where we could go to comfort each other. Many things happened over the years, we all spent time together, some times simple and sometimes not so simple. Still now when some of us get together we all know where to meet, there is no question. When I am back home visiting sometimes I drive by or stop in and grab some iced coffee and I swear I can still see us in that back corner trying to grow up too soon and be cool.

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I was out of town and having a really tough time. I looked up an AA meeting and while I was driving there I thought about pulling into every bar I passed. When I got to the church where the meeting was supposed to be, there was no one there. I noticed a coffee shop across the street and figured that would be a good place for me to go, to figure out what I wanted to do. As I was having coffee, contemplating a nice cold beer, I saw a man reading an "Alcoholics Anonymous" flyer a couple of tables away from me. I approached him and shared my troubles with him. We talked for hours. That was four years ago. I still call him every time I go to that town.

I find that coffee and long talks with people can turn into good friendships. On a personal level, I began a really good friendship just from meeting over a cup of coffee. We both like coffee and good conversation. We usually get together a few times a week and drink coffee and talk about anything. Good things do and can happen over coffee. I know. I wouldn't trade my good friend for anything!

In just reading the examples that were provided, a number of good memories were brought back to me. As I read through each one, I found that I could relate to many of them. It shows the versatility of a coffee shop. A coffee shop is a great place to facilitate a variety of interactions. It's not limited to coffee houses - coffee itself seems to be present at a number of important social interactions. For example, when the family is together for a holiday, such as Thanksgiving or Christmas, we start the morning together with coffee. We all sit around and "wake up" as a group. It's a great way to share time together. My experiences at coffee shops have ranged from collaborating with a group on a project, to catching up with old friends, to making new friends. My favorite experience is probably catching up with someone whom I haven't had the opportunity to see in a while. I love that we are able to just stop our busy schedules and sit down in one place together and just focus on catching up on what we've missed. It is times like those that I truly value.

As a graduate teaching assistant at Oregon State University, undergrads are constantly asking for help. Instead of meeting them in a dark, dreary office, I generally suggest the coffee shop directly across the street from the lab where I teach. I buy coffee at this particular shop and always get my "free coffee" card stamped. Instead of using them for myself, I give them to students to redeem for a coffee of their choice. That way, I don't have to really pay for the coffee and I am not tied to a stuffy office. Female students especially prefer the public venue to a closed door office with a male instructor. The relaxed atmosphere helps students to study, and the coffee shop owner appreciates the "advertising" I do for the coffee shop.

When I was a freshman in college, I went to a local coffee house with some of my classmates. We were able to hang out and get to know one another a little better while relaxing, listening to the live entertainment, and enjoying some of our favorite drinks and snacks. It helped a lot of the group grow closer together and some are still friends now - six years later!

Marketing Ideas

I think you can hire some writers on Mturk to develop a script. Use Mturk to hire cast and crew in a select city and hire an editor on Mturk to complete the job. You would have to make sure that the actors you hire from Mturk. This movie idea would be very easy to market and would get press for being the first online collective film project. Publishing a book after the movie is made can be a great way to expose viewers to more serendipitous scenarios. A website that would allow users to post their own experiences can be created before the movie is released to create buzz for the project. I wonder if Amazon would feature the film since it would be created using Mturk?

When I think about your Coffee Stories vignettes, several possibilities come to mind... How about a mini-series, based on the web, with each episode based on one of the stories? For the movie or a television show, take an approach like the old Love Boat TV series, where several different story lines intertwined, tied together by the fact that they were happening on the ship at the same time and the crew (or, in the case of the coffee shop, the staff) provided the continuity. Maybe coffee chains would like to keep something like this going on their website, have a story of the month, and eventually develop it into a book using only incidents that occurred in their chain of shops. Some of the stories lend themselves to poems or song lyrics. It could be an interesting theme album. There is a new school in Chicago, Flashpoint Academy, which teaches film, sound, animation and video game design. They may be interested in partnering on this as a project for their students.

The film should begin by showing images of the coffee house, Quartermaine, and show the owners opening the store on an average day. The voice over will be the story of the man who was drinking coffee there when the woman walked up to him and asked him to help her with her coffee shop and he ended up marrying her daughter. That is a great beginning! Then, the plot would be a series of vignettes in which the characters, who are friends of friends (Love Actually meets Six Degrees of Separation) go through their lives, ordering coffee in the morning before work, or stopping by on dates.

Coffee Stories as a book would have a limited audience, but if you could combine the stories with other content such as recipes involving coffee, or photographs of retro coffee shops, - it would be an easier sell to both consumers and specialty shops/book retailers. It might also be possible to license the stories to a chain such as Starbucks, who frequently put some sort of content on their cups. As a movie, the stories should interconnect in some way, either through location (the same coffee shop) or connections between characters. None of these ideas are mutually exclusive. It is possible to

strengthen the brand through multiple platforms, as long as everything is consistent and well planned.

Do this as a viral YouTube Movie. Post small portions of the script for creators to use. Set up a drop box for users to submit videos to so you can edit video together into a short film. Give users specifications for video size/format. Create a Twitter account for *Coffee Stories* and hashtag# coffeestories to get word out. Create a *Coffee Stories* fanpage on Facebook and possibly a Facebook application such as a quiz "What Coffee Story Are You?" or a link to send the book to a friend. Start a *Coffee Stories* friendfeed.

How about printing them up as a pack of coasters for coffee shops to use? You could sell the "coffee stories" as a promotional tool for the shops to use with their customers.

I think some of these stories could be turned into commercials for Starbucks or Folgers. It could be sort of like that series of commercials Anthony Head did years ago, only each story would be different, like Starbucks Tale Number 10 or something. You could also print the short story on a table card or napkin (Starbucks) or on the coffee can/packaging (Folgers).

Coffee Stories could be turned into blog / social networking site - where people could actually meet in person through coffee shop networks. Advertising revenue on the website could be provided by companies like Starbucks. It could be turned into a sitcom much like *The Office* but with different characters every episode.

I think this idea would work well as filler between shows on HBO for example - 15 minute episodes that play out between movies.

Turn these stories into decorations for coffee cups - one-sixth of the story on each cup in a set of 6, one-fourth on each of a set of 4. When you have coffee with friends, you would have a complete story among you. Or the same kind of thing, but used in a coffee shop -- stories are mixed and matched, customers mingle with each other to figure out whose stories are connected and in what order -- during a poetry reading or performance night, perhaps.

This project has the potential to become a brilliant companion book (hard copy and eBook) and a documentary film.

Flyer Ideas

Get free e-books and more! **Share your stories!**

Coffee Stories



Have you ever experienced a major life event in a coffee shop? Has something ever happened to you in a coffee shop that altered your life forever?

Do you want to share your story and see it published? Share your coffee shop story with us!

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E-mail: coffee@lifebushido.com

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Coffee Stories

Life happens...
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Coffee Stories

It Gets Heated ...

When somebody spills the beans

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I think all the small things that have happened to me over coffee at coffeehouses add up to something great. I have met old friends and made new friends. One of my best experiences is sitting alone and having someone come up to me who noticed a book I was reading and introducing him to me.

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Theatre Concept

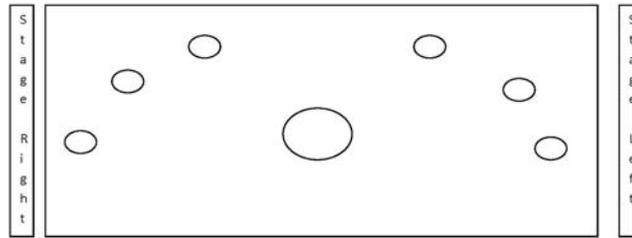


Diagram 1: Audience (House)

Concept 1: A series of vignettes across the stage (5-6)

- They appear one at a time, with the rest of the stage kept dark
- Each vignette tells a story, with the tie-in being the coffee shop
- A spotlight, two chairs and a small table, give the “coffee shop” feel to each platform (each ○ represents a platform)
- The centre larger platform can be used for stories involving more than 2-4 people (group scenes).
- The vignettes essentially become a revolving set of stories from the book.
- Perhaps all the characters could join a the centre platform for a sort of finale

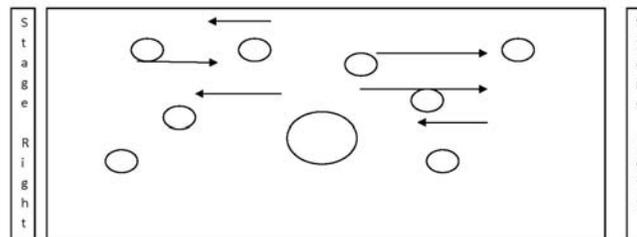


Diagram 2: Audience (House)

Concept 2:

- Dark stage, except for a spotlight centre stage
- Each vignette is told, either by one person sitting on a bar stool centre stage (i.e.-a monologue) interspersed with 2-4 people vignettes (as in concept 1, but only at centre stage) – this allows the program to be presented in a smaller staging area (i.e.- in a room rather than a stage/theatre)
- The other tables could be part of a backdrop (setting the scenes) or removed altogether (each ← represents moving people)
- Using the centre only allows for moving backgrounds. In essence, the coffee shop could be an outdoor cafe, with people strolling in and around the storyteller(s); or it could be indoors, but with the focus on centre, you could use a chorus of people to create background effect at other tables, strolling around, ordering etc.