



# What's the Story?

March 2018

## Change takes Courage

Last month we were running a Storytelling Conference session in Dublin. The night before the conference, the client took us all to the Epic Museum, to hear the stories of how the Irish overcame enormous obstacles – invasion, wars, famine – to achieve freedom as a nation and to create a culture which has become famous world-wide.

70 million Irish people had to emigrate to start new lives - most noticeably in the United States. An extraordinary 22 US Presidents had Irish ancestry including JFK and Ronald Reagan.

Three words in the exhibition summed up what the Irish had to do to survive:

“Change takes Courage”. It provided the perfect lead for our opening remarks.

Do you want to change? Can you find the courage? If you can, who knows what you could achieve!

## A Strong Opening

We went to an Intelligence Squared Debate recently in London. The motion was “The Left has right on its side”.

One of the speakers was a Labour MP Stella Creasy. She’s made quite a name for herself, campaigning successfully for Jane Austen to be put on the new £10 note and for a change in the Northern Ireland abortion laws. She also won “Backbencher of the Year 2017” awarded by the Spectator.

The debate started but Stella was still in the House of Commons taking part in another debate. All three speakers had their say and we wondered whether Stella would make it.

She finally arrived, to immediately stand without notes, and tell us why we should vote for the motion.

We liked her energy, her passion and the originality of her words. She used the power of three – a list of 3 examples in her opening to engage us.

“Here’s three words to scare you: **President Donald Trump**,  
four words to make you despair: **Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson**  
and eight words to give you hope: **We achieve more together than we do alone**”.

The motion didn’t win, but Stella made a lot of new friends.

Intelligence Squared put out a weekly podcast and show videos of past debates. Worth a visit – [www.intelligencesquared.com](http://www.intelligencesquared.com)

## The most famous Crusader

Billy Graham, the American evangelist, died at the age of 99 in February. We both saw him at different times when he came to London.

He was a powerful speaker, charismatic, caring and credible. He spoke to over 250 million people in his crusades and certainly converted millions. Some people felt he was selling Christianity like detergents on TV. He was certainly doing a hard-sell.

He learnt how to speak by going into the swamps near his boyhood home and practised in front of the bullfrogs, alligators and other wildlife.

We're glad, we heard him all those years ago, because it showed us how important it is to show your belief in whatever you're selling

## How are things?

Do you think you know what your partner or best friend is thinking? What about a long-standing client?

Research shows that the longer you know someone the less likely you are to predict what they think.

If you've known someone for 2 years you're only 42% likely to be right.

Research has also discovered that new contacts are more likely to become engaged with you if you ask them questions and show an interest in them as people, instead of delivering a short self-promotion when you introduce yourself.

Inquisitiveness works – whether you're meeting someone new or getting together with a long-standing client.

When you show interest you are on the road to building trust and improving your power to influence.

What do you think of that?

## How advertising works

Here's a story we'd not heard before about how advertising works

The chewing-gum magnate R.J.Wrigley was on a flight to Chicago when the friend sitting next to him asked why, with Wrigley's chewing gum far outselling all other brands, he still needed to advertise.

The great man replied, "For the same reason that the pilot keeps this plane's engines running even though we're already in the air".

**Good luck with your stories, pitches and presentations in 2018.**

*Barry Graham & Sally Clare*

