

### **The Crazy Life Of A Kid From Brooklyn by Bill Morgenstein**

My dream then was to play baseball for the New York Yankees. I was on the Stuyvesant baseball team, but because of my working hours, my playing time was limited. During my time at public school I was quite the rascal, along with my best friend Louie. In high school I continued my antics, only without Louie, who went to a different school. At the University of Alabama my cray antics were somewhat moderated after I met and married my wife, Sylvia.

While waiting to be drafted into the service I got a job with my wife's relatives' footwear wholesale company traveling to the "Hill" country of Tennessee. After being drafted I was sent to Fort Jackson for basic training. My next assignment was Fort McClellan, Alabama. It was great duty since I was about sixty miles from where we lived in Birmingham.

It was great that is until I was sent to Korea for 18 months. When I was discharged, my first dream to become a corporate president by the time I was 35 years of age and after 8 eventful years with Thom McAn shoes company that goal was fulfilled. After that I became an Executive Vice President of a shoe import-export company.

At the peak of that career I formed my own company, which became quite successful. Throughout that period, I traveled the world having fun, interesting and exciting times. I continued to experience the ups and downs of a life well lived in Bill Morgenstein's compelling new memoir, "The Crazy Life of a Kid from Brooklyn".

While first reminiscing upon his childhood in Brooklyn during the depression, Morgenstein traces his life through times of war, peace, and everything in between. At times funny and heartbreaking, "The Crazy Life of a Kid in Brooklyn" details Morgenstein's being drafted into the US Army, and his unusual adventures there.

After discharge taking an executive training job with Thom McAn. then, moving up the ladder before becoming president of the Kitty Kelly shoes chain. Then joining an import-export company as Executive Vice President, before listening to his wife's sage advice to form his own company, which eventually results in a Fifty-Five-million-dollar company. Then, because of greed and over reach, his despair at losing it all to a scam, and much more. After closing the company, he retires for two weeks, answers a selling ad for a division of Montgomery Ward and rising to Vice President. After that company is sold, he retires again, this time for 10 days. After an extraordinary sales record he is made an area vice president. He eventually helps form a Merchant Cash Advance company and acts as its Executive Vice President.

During his army and working life and travels he has chance encounters with such historical figures as Sergeant York, Cordell Hull, Sid Gordon, Jomo Kenyatta, Vince Camuto, Ken Cole, Juan Peron, Jim Nabors, Garry Marshall, Donna Karan, David Rockefeller, Mohammed Ali, Nando Parrado, Regine, King Mohammed V, Andy Williams, Hoagy Carmichael, Sandy Koufax and many others providing amusing cultural touchstones that reveal a willingness to embrace everything life has to offer.

Through all the successful, disappointing, dangerous, educational, and enlightening experiences that have shaped his life, Morgenstein remains philosophical as he explores the roles of ethics, honesty, and unfailing determination in shaping the human experience.

Bill Morgenstein currently lives with his wife of 60+ years and spends the summers with his sons, their wives his grandchildren in the Northeast. Morgenstein still does both sales and consulting for successful business that are looking to expand by borrowing money for their business.

### **Book Excerpt: Sales Tutor**

Moe was a friend at school and one day he approached me and asked if we could find a way to make some money. We had been going to the hospital every month and selling a pint of our blood for \$20. A glass of orange juice, a little rest and you were fine. Moe was a nice simple guy. He was honest and the type of person that you liked immediately. He knew nothing about selling but he was in my opinion a quick learner. That same week I was sitting on a bench at in an area of the campus that was called the "Quadrangle". This was the center of the campus where you could congregate or simply walk to class.

Picture this thin, pockmarked guy who comes up to me and explains that he had invented a revolutionary Sterling silver cleaner. I called him "Slim" and since he had a carton of bottles with him, which he called "NO DIP" and since it had a pretty good odor, I took a dozen bottles, along with his phone number in case I sold all of them. When I showed the No Dip to Moe, he seemed a little bewildered so I told Moe to just watch me and you will learn some selling techniques (which actually I was yet to learn).

Now, in those days you went from door to door and people were generally friendly, especially in the South. We pick a decent looking, tree lined street and the first house that we hit a nice-looking housewife answered the door. We're in luck! I start my spiel: "Miss Johnson we have a revolutionary product that cleans your silverware. May we demonstrate it?"

It will clean all of your sterling and there will be no charge and no obligation on your part". Mrs. Johnson proceeds to take us to her silverware cabinet, which was a fancy felt lined box. There lies the blackened tarnished silver. I proceed to open a jar of No Dip and both Moe and I are rubbing, rubbing, rubbing. Nothing is happening. The silver is the same as when we started. Moe gives me that scared to death look. I laugh and I ask Miss Johnson who is watching us with a curious, quizzical look on her face; "Ms Johnson do

you have any NoxOn in the house? Now, NoxOn was a known silver polish cleaner which was sold in the grocery stores. She goes looking under the sink in a cabinet and lo and behold she finds a jar of NoxOn. We then proceed to polish all of her silverware and did a fairly nice job of it. Our lovely housewife obviously felt sorry for us and she bought 2 jars of our revolutionary silver cleaner. "You see Moe I told you that selling was easy". Moe went back to his studies but I knew that a career change was necessary so I answered a help wanted ad for a chain link fence salesman. (Ads were not gender neutral then).

The company was the Alabama Fence Company and Bob Shockley was the owner. Bob hired me and explained that in his thick Alabama, real country boy (which he certainly was) accent that he was going to teach me the chain link fence business. That included the measurement, installation, digging fence post holes, anchor and cement the ends and how to stretch the chain link over the posts. Most importantly how to sell chain link fences, which would be the most interesting part. Bob was short, stocky, solidly built with a perpetual smile on his face. He wore a checkered shirt and always had a large Western cowboy hat on. Ready to go. We got into Bob's old Chevy and off we went. I was to just watch bob and learn and only ask questions after the sale was made. (He was quite confident). After all, I was sitting next to the best fence salesman in the entire world. (and so, he was). He caught me grinning, so in order to prove his point he said that while he was driving, I should point to any house and then he would proceed to sell the occupants a fence.

Since there was FHA financing available at the time, even for home improvements such as fencing and since FICO wasn't even invented then it took little if any cash to make the purchase. Now, you know that I wasn't going to let this opportunity pass and when I see a dilapidated house, I told Bob to stop so could get my laugh of the day in. "Bob, let's see if you can make this sale" I said in a half fit of laughter".

We screech to a halt and I was thrown forward since seat belts had not yet been invented yet. I got out and walked to the front door, which had large holes in it. You could see clear out to the back yard. We knocked on the door and I commented that if we were to sell the fence it would be worth more than the whole house, excluding the land. This doesn't bother Mr. Shockley, but then nothing really does. The woman in an old-fashioned print housecoat opens the door. With a dramatic flourish Mr. S. steps back. We are invited into the dusty, dingy house and Mr. S. makes another dramatic gesture. He grabs his large hat from the top with his oversized hand and drops it in the center of the living room on the soiled floor. I'm thinking to myself is this guy nuts? What have I gotten myself into?

We are seated in 2 large rocking chairs and he proceeds to explain to this woman why we are here. He saw her two lovely children playing in the back..... (a prolonged silence) and that made him extremely sad. If you looked closely there was a tear in Mr. S's eye. The poor woman is a little bewildered and she offers us a glass of water and of course she wants to know what made Bob so sad. He responds: "Well ma'am I happen to be in the fence business and just last week I went to a home just like yours on highway 78 and that poor family felt that they couldn't afford a fence. Don't know if you read last week's Birmingham News about the two young kids that were killed on highway 78?"

The poor woman didn't know where to sign first for a fence all around the house and yes, the fence was worth almost as much as the appraised value of the house. I was stunned but I still need to know why he acted the way he did? Bob explained as follows: When you knock on a door and a woman answers you must know that a woman is very protective of her house and family. Most sales people push forward and the woman will resist, however a woman being naturally curious, when I stepped backwards to move forward, she wanted to see what I was carrying. What about the hat on the floor?

Dropping the hat which sits on your head shows that you respect the woman's housekeeping and that gives her the confidence to trust you. Bob taught me many things about selling and human nature and I did well with him. That is until one day I got a lead in Mt. Brook which is a ritzy suburb "over the mountain" as it's called with some of the finest and prettiest residential areas in the country. Mrs. J--- wanted a chain link fence. Her house was really gorgeous but you had to walk up a hill with a lot of steps. I make it up the steps, knock on the door and then I am absolutely stunned. I laugh every time I think of this.

A tall, funny (only way to describe her face) and I mean funny looking older woman with a long, meaty, pocked marked nose and face opens the door. I stand there dumbstruck afraid that I will go into paroxysms of laughter. So, before I completely crack up, I waved at her, go back down the stairs and wait for me to compose myself. I can't. Every time I start to climb up the stairs I start laughing until there are tears in my eyes. Once I got near the door again, I was afraid that Mrs. J--- would come out. On the fifth try I gave up, went back to the office and quit the job. That ended my chain link fence selling career. We were going to drive to Brooklyn anyway as summer was about to arrive. Our first car was a '48 Dodge. This was the first car with fluid drive but I didn't find out how to use it until about 2 weeks before I sold it, when I finally realized that it was possible to take your foot off the clutch without the car stalling.

We were taking along a couple of fraternity brothers to possibly share in the driving and who we were to drop off in Newark NJ. This was before the Eisenhower East-West, North-South highway express system was built. There were a few 4 lane highways but no freeways or superhighways as yet until Ike started it in 1956. There were mostly two-lane roads so if you drove without stopping it was about a 26-hour trip. Also, there was no air conditioning so every time we stopped for gas, we'd wet our towels and while driving I would hang my left arm out of the car with the towel over it. That lasted about an hour, after which the towel was dry and you would be seating again. The dust was awful, especially if you were on a dirt road. We were young so we had a good time and we laughed at silly things.

At one point we came to an area where they were repairing the road. We were sitting and sitting and we notice that there isn't too much traffic going the other way. Every once in a while, a car would come and this guy would wave he oncoming car through. Blowing the horn doesn't help so my friend Sandy gets out and strolls over to this guy and says: "Shay shonny you guys ain't too shmart how about letting the young'uns through". They look around shrug and let us through. Gas was probably 20 cents a gallon and they washed your windshield front and back and checked your oil. Bottle of coke (no cans) and a burger were about \$1.00.

Summer driving was hot and winter driving was foggy and treacherous. When you finally got to your destination you were completely exhausted but you were sure glad to get there. My parents were happy to see us arrive completely safe. After resting a bit, we would go out and celebrate with at a good Chinese restaurant.

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**Review Posted by: William Phenn 5/23/14 in Book Reviews**

"The Crazy Life of a Kid from Brooklyn was an exciting autobiography to read. His energetic & skillful life, jobs, career choices, home life, & family.

The extensive travels of the author & his many life experiences are told in an energetic & is very descriptive.

Bill knows just where to inject riotous humor into his book.

The book is extremely well written. He covers all aspects of his unusual life & keeps the reader glued to the pages from beginning to end. The book is a literary masterpiece, and I gave it a very fine A on my tight scale.

What I hope comes out of reading this book, besides the humor is not only the love of life but also the extreme dislike for injustice and tyranny. Read the book and find out what one Crazy Life of a Kid From Brooklyn was really like growing up and still is right now. Stories that will double you over in laughter, make you angry or just plain not believe what you read, Bill Morgenstein tells it all in the first-person narrative, straight from the hip and definitely from the soles of some very expensive shoes.

Let's give this book: FIVE GOLDEN FLATS OR PUMPS OR BOOTS.”

Fran Lewis: Reviewer

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**Reviewed by Gretchen Jawurek for Readers' Favorite**

11/15/2015

Review Rating: 4 Stars

“The "The Crazy Life of a Kid from Brooklyn "says it all; Bill Morgenstein has a full and fascinating life and probably is still cooking up some new adventure. Every week, every month, every year there was a new adventure and all in the name of business. Morgenstein was in the shoe business, not just selling in the local shoe stores, although that is where he started, he swiftly made a name for himself. He was the one that went to the factories in the States and overseas bringing new styles to the companies.”

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**Review by Sam Gaskill on February 14, 2016**

5 Stars

Excellent Book!

Format: Kindle Edition

“Bill Morgenstein has delivered a beautifully-written story about his life. From the time that he was a child to his growing and adult years, he lived quite a journey. This well-thought out memoir is funny and witty; you can tell that the author has many fond memories of his former years. It's so interesting to hear about how society was back in the 40's, 50's, 60's and even 70's. Bill met many interesting people on his adventures and I loved hearing about all of them. It's not often that I find an autobiography that I truly enjoy but this was an exception. There is a lot to learn from this novel and I highly recommend it to everyone.”

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**Review by Bradley Scott Reisman on June 7, 2017**

5 Stars

Highly recommend it to all. Crazy life of a kid from Brooklyn was fantastic!

Format: Paperback-Verified Purchase

“What a great book. Love to read about extraordinary stories about experiences of folks that offer guidance for future reservations including myself.

So glad I got the chance to get this book as part of my library! Highly recommend it to all.”

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**Review by Ed Connor: President, Econn Systems, LLC**

“I've known Bill Morgenstein for several years, both in business and personal. Bill is the "cream of the crop" to all that know him. ... I'm not a big reader, however when Bill told me that he had written his book "The Crazy Life Of A Kid From Brooklyn", I purchased a copy, and began to read.

What a rush, it was one of those fascinating books that I couldn't put down.

The life experiences, and business experiences that Bill had, kept me glued to the pages.

Bill's life was filled with success, heartbreak and some of the funniest situations you could ever imagine”

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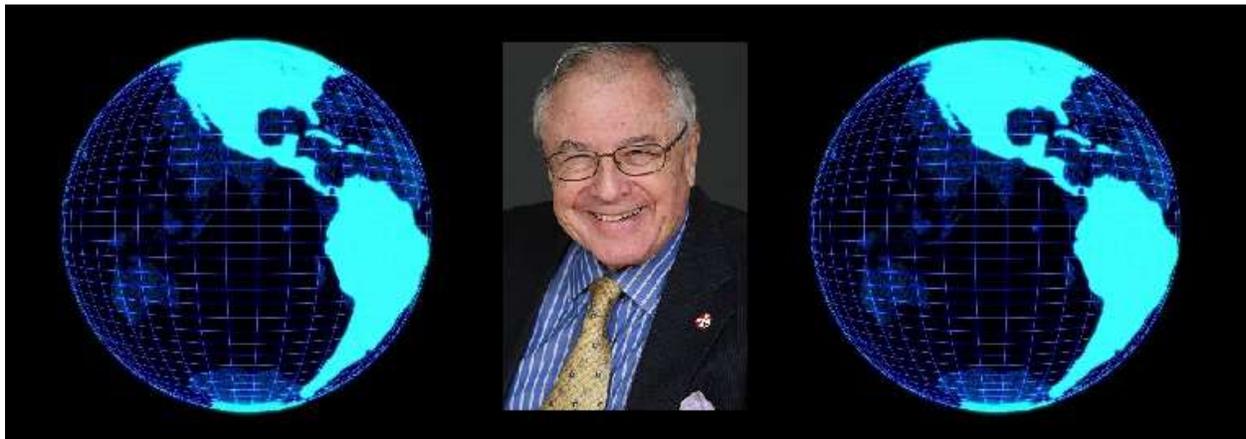
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**About Bill Morgenstein:** Hilarious rendition, that teaches and inspires. This book includes:

- Brooklyn - 30's, 40's 50's

- Public School antics and the Golden Gloves
- Stuyvesant H.S. (NY) - 40's
- Sodium bombs and other adventures
- U of Alabama - early 50's
- Big Joke on Air Force ROTC, meeting/marrying my current wife., a job selling in Appalachia
- Army: Ft. Jackson (Basic), Ft. McClellan (Chem Corp), Korea
- More jokes (backfiring), fighting and teaching English to Korean students.
- President of a Shoe Chain before I was 35 yrs. old.
- Working my way up from the bottom to president and forming my own successful company. Building a large business and then trying to retire (twice).
- Encounters/ Sgt York, Cordell Hull, Jomo Kenyatta, Nando Parrado, Regine, Vince Camuto, Peter Drucker, Mohammed Ali, The Girl From Ipenema, Ken Cole, Billy Graham, Jomo Kenyatta, Pele, Nando Parrado, Hoagy Carmichael, Ken Cole, Juan Peron, Jim Nabors, King Mohammed V, David Rockefeller, Gary Marshall, Sandy Koufax & many others.

The book starts with my family & my best friend Louie, who constantly got me in trouble both in and out of school. In spite of this we remained the closest of friends throughout his relatively short life. I then go into exploits at Stuyvesant H.S. in N.Y., doing things that would not be tolerated in this day and age. From there on to the University of Alabama, which among other things was known for its practical jokes. One of the funnier ones (I didn't think so) was played at my expense. Later, I was to get a little revenge by playing a famous joke on the ROTC and Air Force staff. After being thrown out of one fraternity and then joining another fraternity, (AE pi) which is where I met my wife of many years; we then go through the trials & tribulations of opening a small business while still in school. Upon graduation I go to work selling shoes in the Hillbilly Country of TN. It was there that I met some of the finest people, learning some great life lessons, and savoring those memories to this day.

After 5 years of ROTC I was drafted into the army as a buck private. After basic training I was stationed in Ft. McClellan, AL. That doesn't last long however as I am suddenly sent to Korea (I thought that the orders were fake because I had played a joke the month before). I write about the unusual experiences aboard ship and some of the funny and not so funny non-combat experiences in Korea. Those included an army acting career, teaching some wonderful young Koreans, some close calls, & then how I lost a couple of stripes.

After being discharged from the army we returned to Brooklyn where I was offered a job as a Management Trainee for Thom McAn shoes. I managed to rise up the ranks in various divisions and locations when I am offered a position as Executive V. P. of Kitty Kelly Shoe Co, with the idea of becoming President within six months. I wanted to fulfill my dream of becoming a president of a company before I was 35 years of age. After 2 1/2 very profitable years I had to leave due to internal family problems. After a couple higher position assignments, learning the import-export business, and traveling to over 48 countries I started Marquesa International and Marquesa Import company. This became a very successful operation until a vicious scam, that was perpetrated on us made me decide to retire.

I quickly realized (after 2 weeks) that retirement was not for me and so I went into a new field; banking. My first assignment was selling direct to businesses for Advanceme until I worked my way up to Senior V. P. of Sterling. When the market crashed in 2008, I formed my own commercial loan brokerage...

I've been married over 60 years with 2 fine children and grandchildren

**Amazon Author's Page:**

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**Professional Website:**

<https://www.thecrazylifeofbill.com>

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