



Resilience, Energy, Time

Creating Our Own Igors

by JUDY BERANGER

According to *The Telegram* (October 2, 2010), the strength and wrath of Hurricane Igor hasn't been experienced in Newfoundland and Labrador since "...the Independence Hurricane of 1775!" The energy contained in that devastating marvel of nature was extraordinary. Since then we have heard about the havoc in the endless headlines and stories like "It's gone, Igor leaves despair, damage, and destruction in its path." If we look further in the same media we are moved by the stories of resilience emerging as people are connecting and reconnecting in sharing their own rising energy to cope with and manage this most unwelcome challenge.

For those who suffered and continue to suffer at the hands of Igor the wounds are slowly starting to heal. For some, it will take a long time to reorganize their space and begin to discover how their "new normal" will look. Homes and whole communities have been damaged; landscapes have changed leaving scars and empty spaces where majestic trees had once stood proud, throughout the storms of many decades, before they succumbed to Igor. In my own back yard we lost a beautiful view of trees that on a daily basis made us feel like we lived in the country. For now, our new view is a constant reminder of Igor but we are purposefully focusing on replacing our thoughts so that we can better appreciate the lovely sunsets that previously hid behind the trees that are no more.

What has Igor taught us about energy, about time, about relationships, about life and families and teams and workplaces and about the discoveries that can come from upheaval and devastation? Some people experienced terror as they witnessed the untimely and tragic loss of one precious life before their very eyes. Most of us were reminded of how truly vulnerable we really are, how fragile life truly is and yet how resilient we can be in spite of it all.

Be it for better or for worse, every one of our thoughts, emotions and behaviours has an energy consequence. In their book, *The Power of Full Engagement*, Loehr and Schwartz (2005) illustrate

that the ultimate measure of our lives is not how much time we spend on the planet, but rather how much energy we invest in the time that we have here. The premise of their book is that performance, health and happiness are grounded in the skilful management of energy. At the heart of their wisdom is the fact that: "Energy, not time, is the fundamental currency of high performance."

There is something in human nature that drives us to think "hope" even as we feel despair tugging at us from behind. The tragedy that is Igor serves as a backdrop of how people can be resilient, finding new energy and inspiration regardless of what is happening around them. Thankfully, for the majority of people it does not take a hurricane to remind us of our capacity to share ourselves and our time and in doing so we receive back a hundredfold. Most teachers are doing that on a daily basis.

Igors Cause Havoc

If not mindful and purposeful in our own lives we can be like little "Igors" – going around causing havoc and destruction without ever comprehending any damage we may be causing. Our behaviour and the words we use have energy consequences to ourselves and others on a daily basis. Hurtful words can sting in a person's thoughts for far too long. Igor teaches us to not underestimate the energy we can have even when things are tough. Mitch Albom, in his bestseller, *Tuesdays with Morrie*, talks about his visits with his old college professor, Morrie Schwartz, who is dying of Lou Gehrig's disease, a brutal neurological disorder. As Morrie gets progressively worse, Mitch visits him every Tuesday and they have wonderful conversations about life. One week, when Mitch asks him about death, Morrie recommends that we imitate the Buddhists and be prepared for death at any time. Why? So we can be more involved in our lives while we're living them. So we can share the good energy.

Courage is energy's first cousin. The Latin word "cor" means "heart". So when we say "take heart",

we also mean “have courage”. “Courage” is also the root word of “encouragement”. As we encourage others we become more courageous, reinforcing it in ourselves and others. Courage gives us the energy to make things happen, to act and to believe. Many teachers model courageous acts on a daily basis. In one workshop a lady told the story of the struggles she had in her early life living with a mentally ill parent who chose not to get help. As a teenager she admits she acted out in horrible ways and challenged every teacher. She holds dear a favourite memory of a courageous teacher who was, “a tiny light in my life when all else was dark.” This high school teacher told her repeatedly that he saw past all her disrespectful behaviours toward her intelligence and ability. Today, as a successful leader of over three hundred people she tells of how courage presented itself to her through her teacher and continues to energize her whenever she recalls the memory.

Energetic teachers are confident, self-assured, empathic, and value every single day. “What gives you energy? What vision do you hold for your life and how can you get there? How have you passed on energy to a student today? Think about an energetic teacher you know who is dynamic, highly motivated, hard working, and gets lots done with time left over. Does s/he have any more time to work with than you do? Energy can come from a glance, a knowing, a feeling, a synchronicity. The emerging field of cardio-energetics is teaching us about the powerful magnetic energy between people.

What is your favourite song?

What is your favourite song? One that you like to bellow out loud if you are sure no one is within hearing distance? Music gives energy. It can fill us with indescribable energy and enthusiasm. Make a point of bellowing out one of your favourite songs on your way home and notice how it feels.

Dennis Lewis, in his book *The Tao of Natural Breathing* says that “The integration of natural breathing into our lives begins with learning how to sense ourselves more completely and accurately – to consciously occupy our bodies.” Conscious breathing practice builds energy and endurance.

Jean Shinoda and many other energy specialists say that the balance in our bodies is determined by the flow of physical and emotional energy and the lack of flow leads to disharmony and disease. The health of our body depends on the flow of energy to the cells. The amount of energy available to us at any given moment depends upon the quality of our inner and outer environments. Linda Hartley states that all that lives has the ability to move based on some

personal motivation, whether conscious or unconscious, instinctual or volitional. She says that even a plant, as it grows, adapts its shape and position so as to be touched by the light of the sun. People who only adapt their shape to critiquing others will have a challenging time energizing themselves. One teacher talked about the energy he felt leaving his body as he listened to his colleague complain about two particular teachers who had bubbly personalities, who were too enthusiastic and too passionate!!

Knowledge of the eleven body systems and their functions are essential to energy awareness. These systems work together each one effectively fulfilling a vital function maintaining health and balance while growing energy. To learn more about the body systems approach to health go to: www.familyherbal-clinic.com/bodysystems.html

What gives us energy is unique to each person. Being fully engaged in what you are doing at any given moment brings more energy and is truly a gift to ourselves. One teacher maintains energy by walking three times/week at 6:00 a.m. for about forty minutes, with a friend, rain or shine, a habit he started about five years ago. He finds the fresh air and the exercise a great start to his day and he feels like he has more time now and more energy. What is one thing you do weekly to grow energy and protect the dynamic balance that exists in your body between your physical, emotional, mental and spiritual energy? Along with all the devastation of Igor we are now hearing stories from people witnessing a previously latent energy and tenacity. People want to support others in tangible ways. There is more action than talk.

Benjamin Disraeli once said, “The greatest good you can do for another is not just to share your riches, but to reveal to him, his own”. In so doing the result is a surge of energy for all concerned – our own little positive Igors!

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