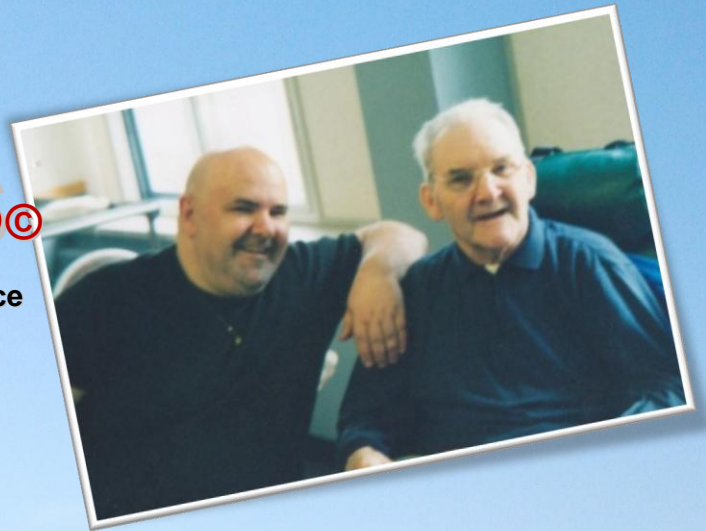


# Heartprints®

A Story of Joy, Love, Strength and Remembrance



e p i c engagement  
**FREE THOUGHT SERIES**





# Before taking this journey, please note...

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Thanks for your courtesy, and interest.

Barry Lewis Green, aka The Unity Guy™







# Meet Mac Green

on my own

chosen to share *personally* earned wisdom for greater joy and success at school, work and in the community; and, most importantly, in caring for those we love who walk the path of Alzheimer's. I see this *eBooklet* as an experience which can hopefully leave a powerful, poignant and positive impression that lasts and makes a difference for individuals and organizations alike. My message is about honoring spirit, celebrating mission, taking positive action, redefining success and creating happiness. This booklet is for caregivers, loved ones, medical professionals and anyone else interested in engaging in a life and work of service and joy. There are no "answers"; only insights that might free us to walk the path for what it is... engaging a new and emerging friend.

**Malcolm George Green** was born in Winterton (then called Scilly Cove) Trinity Bay, Newfoundland on December 23, 1924. From what I know, his family was not one of material wealth, with a father who fished hard and a mother hunchbacked and caring long *and* hard for five children, 3 girls and 2 boys. My father was the "baby" and all of the children *adored* their mother. She was their angel. At the age of 15, my father "lost" his mother and then began a process of growing up fast. He left school early (the picture at the top of the page is his Grade 5 class with him in the top right corner; quite handsome) in Grade 6 is my understanding.



My father was and is my hero. He was *not* perfect. No one is. In fact, I suggest in the classes I teach and the sessions I run that perfect as a *noun* is a myth. Perfect as a *verb* is our best reality. As far as I can see, Dad spent a lifetime *perfecting*. He was always trying something, *building* something. By primary school, I was being driven *to* a school (built with the brick of my uncle's company for which Dad worked), in a dump truck. How cool is that at 5!? Driven to school in a dump truck!

Dad was into construction. He built things. I thought we were moving so many times when Dad would choose to build a house only to turn around and sell it. He worked often 6 days a week, with mom taking care of the home. There were challenges personal *and* professional. There were successes as well. What I remember is that Dad worked, and he believed in a good day's work. As I grew, I increasingly appreciated the amount of work both my father and mother did. It was the work of *commitment* and *determination*.



# The Journey

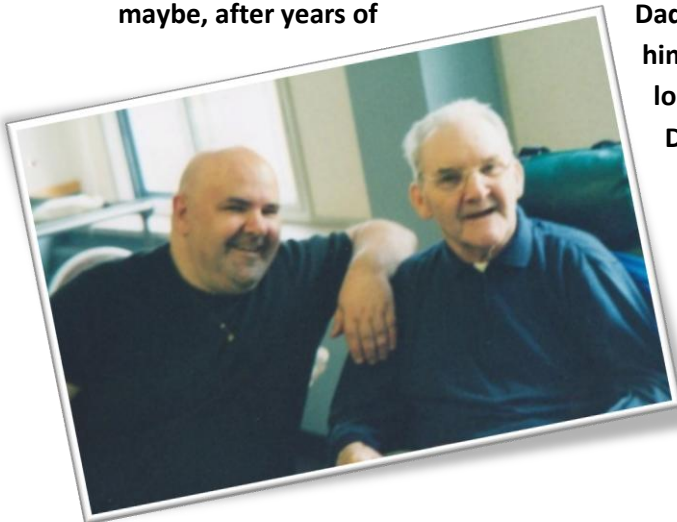
*So, why do I share this?* Well, I am guessing that you remember where you were on September 11, 2001. I do. More so, I remember where I was on October 15, 2001; in Corner Brook, a small city about 7 hours' drive and 1 hour's flight from my home in Mt. Pearl, Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada. Through a call, I was informed that Dad had been rushed to hospital and it "didn't look good". I took the first flight back and found my father in Emergency with a shortage of beds. As I walked over to him, he smiled and said "Where have you been?" With much guilt, I started to explain that I had been working and this was the quickest I could get there. He stopped me in mid sentence saying, "You were working? That's my boy."

The doctors estimated he had 72 hours and we kept vigil. All I could think of was how I had ignored the diagnosis of the last year. In 2000, he had been diagnosed with Alzheimer Disease and I had acquired the disease of "denial". Even caring for him on the long holiday weekend of July 1, 2001 (Canada Day) had done nothing really to assuage my denial. Dad could not be so sick. He worked hard his whole life and this could not be happening. Countless signs were ignored and I was of little help to Mom other than to pay lip service to her concerns and "be there" when I was needed.

Now, in October of 2001, I am being told he has 72 hours! Well, he was transported to the *quiet room* at the Hoyles' Home to pass on with dignity, and to everyone's surprise (though it should not have been) once he got there, he seemed to like it and decided he wasn't going anywhere. He thought he was home and we made the decision at that time to do what we once thought was unthinkable. With all of his health issues of heart and diabetes and now Alzheimer's, we elected to have him stay at the Hoyles'. It was close to us and my work, and he already thought himself home. Fixed, right? Nope.

I still resisted. I still wanted my Dad "back". I would show up and he would smile and say "It's good to see you." I would say "It is good to see you." Then he would say "We have to build that wall over there." I would respond by arguing that we could not. So often, we need to be right more so than kind! Either way, there was much arguing and I never left happy. Then, one morning after reflection and prayers for months, I awoke to a thought. I heard "It is not about you." From that, I understood that my unhappiness was centered on how much I was "losing". I had forgotten that maybe, just maybe, after years of

Dad providing for me, now it was my turn to provide for him. Maybe I was about to *gain* something. So, to make a long story short, that same day I decided to work with Dad to plan and build the wall. Suffice it to say, once I let go of my expectations and need to "keep" Dad I was able to really be "with" him and that changed everything. I began getting to know Mac Green, the man. *That* was amazing.





# Learnings

Here are some things I learned of Mac Green over the next 2 years. There was so much more.

***My father was never much of a singer.***

**Mac Green could belt them out.**

There were times when I entered the Hoyles' Home only to hear Dad singing "How Great Thou Art". Often times, with other residents engaged, we would sing "Home, Home on the Range" in 3 and 4 part harmonies. There was so much joy, and, after years of thinking I might be adopted (I loooooove singing; my vice is karaoke), I now knew from where I received the love of singing.

***My father never showed much emotion.***

**Mac Green loved his mother so very much.**

At the mere mention of his mother's name, tears would well up. In addition, he showed so much love to us in the way he smiled as we entered the room. He touched us with caring hands in ways we thought he might be averse... apparently when I was an infant he would rock me in my basket as he was afraid to pick me up in case I "broke". ☺

***My father knew how to lay down the law, with justice.***

**Mac Green was a little bit of a rebel.**

The stories he shared about girlfriends and getting in trouble... sometimes too much information... it was magical. I saw that twinkle in his eye; making me feel much closer to him as a friend, *and* father.

***My father was a construction guy.***

**Mac Green once dreamed of being a Minister.**

From what I can piece together, once his mother passed, he had to make hay and income, and the practicalities of life got in the way. He went on to work hard and keep trying, through trials and triumphs, but his early dream was spiritual. While he never went to church with us growing up, I now see it *might* have brought back memories of earlier dreams. Either way, it was an awakening for *me*.



7 pieces of advice in caring for your loved one and yourself, learned by me, the *best* way; through experience.

# 7 Wisdoms

## Laugh

Once I realized that making Dad smile and laugh would help me smile and laugh, I realized that all I needed to do was “walk” where he wanted to go, talk about what he wanted to talk about. Then we could share and smile and laugh without me insisting on him being “better” or more like “Dad”. We laughed a lot from there on.

## Learn

Once I realized that being with *Mac Green* would be a learning experience, it got interesting and *even* exciting. The Dad I knew was a real person... and a new friend.

## Lead and Live

I had to know what I wanted out of this. I could not make Dad “better”, but I could make him feel happy and loved. That became my mission and I was determined to make that happen as much as possible each and every day. I knew what I wanted; him happy. That, in turn, required courage... the courage to live and serve.

## Love

If you can't be with the one you love, then love the one you're with... if I am “losing” Dad, I am “gaining” Mac. Let me love whoever he is NOW. Once I got that, it became easier each day. It was never going to be EASY, but it got easier. It's not about being perfect. It's about perfecting; getting better at it each day.

## Leverage

Use your resources. The resources at the end of this booklet, friends, other family, whoever with whom you can surround yourself... we even got other residents and family; and a *community* was born. Read, reflect, relax, smile, laugh, pray, share... be real. Ask for help.

Some special advice I received from a wise friend was “Barry, remember that there are 3 parts to being human... mind, body *and* spirit. If the mind and body go in any way, remember his spirit is still there.” That kept me knowing that *Mac Green* was *always* “there”, even when he could not respond.

## Lend

Lend a hand. Be of service. Be gentle and generous. Not just with your loved one, but yourself. Cut yourself some slack. Most of all, I understood that if I kept my heart on Dad with the intention of bringing a smile to his face, my day got better. Karma works. Service is part of karma. What goes around, comes around. Make it joy.





# Cautions and Courage...

Now, let me be clear. The road was not easy. But, the road got *easier*.

In my sessions and classes, I talk about something I call B.O.D.Y. Management™.

**The B is “beam”.** Professional athletes and actors call it “game face” or “method acting”. Essentially, whatever you put on your face (smile, grimace, frown, etc.) goes into your heart. If you frown for more than 30 seconds, you will *feel* it. If you smile for more than 30 seconds, you will feel *that*. You figure it out.

**O is for “oxygen”.** Breathe. Oxygen is used to both relax *and* energize your body; and the deeper the breathing, the healthier and less stressed you are. *Period*.

**D is for “dance”... posture.** Walk like you mean it, like you have faith. Act it and you will start to feel it. No joke, it works... walk like you have courage and you *will* feel it.

**Y refers to “yes” and is more about your brain.** When you face a challenge and your brain wonders “Can I do this?”, have ready the answer YES. Children, when asked if they can draw, do not give you a “no”. Still, somewhere along the way, we tell some of them they can’t and we do it enough that they eventually believe. I have taught adults how to draw in 60 seconds, once we accept that “... yes, we can”.

I used these four elements when going to see my father. It helped me get started. The wisdom from the previous page, kept me going.

So, again, let me be clear. There *will* be challenges. There will be.

That being said, if you use the 7 L’s of the previous page, and the 4 elements of B.O.D.Y.™, this can be a much better road for you *and* your loved one. If you have a support circle, have them encourage one another with these ideas.

That brings me to my last point. I am **The Unity Guy™**. I believe that together we *are* stronger. United we stand, *and* deliver. This is not just *your* journey. So many people are experiencing this journey and doing so alone. Stop, and ask for help.

At 3:34 am, March 24, 2004, after a short battle with pneumonia and much morphine, my father passed on to the next world to his favorite song... Bette Midler’s “The Rose”. That same morning I was scheduled to speak at a youth conference around service for the aging. That morning, I chose to follow through. I dedicated that talk to my father, Mac Green, and the lessons he taught me in sickness *and* in health. With every ounce of love and passion, I spoke to those young hearts and minds... and somewhere, in the infinite, unknowable space we call Heaven, I heard my father, Mac Green, say “That’s my boy!”

I wish you love and peace and joy and strength. I am with you in spirit.



# Resources on Alzheimer's (links in red)

Healthy Place TV

**TV Blog**

The Alzheimer Society of Canada

[www.alzheimer.ca](http://www.alzheimer.ca)

Alzheimer's Association (US)

[www.alz.org](http://www.alz.org)

The Alzheimer's Society (The United Kingdom)

[www.alzheimers.org.uk](http://www.alzheimers.org.uk)

The Alzheimer Society of Ireland

[www.alzheimer.ie/eng](http://www.alzheimer.ie/eng)

And Wikipedia, of course.... ☺

**The Wiki Link**

## ***A BIT ON BARRY...***

Barry works with youth *and* adults, organizations, campuses, companies *and* communities seeking to foster cultures of tangible, taste-able unity, purpose and joy. His expertise is organizational behavior and development and what he calls S.M.A.S.H. Leadership™ and M.E.S.H.™ Management. He is a Virtues Project™ Master Facilitator, Personality Dimensions™ Facilitator, business educator and writer, and connects work on spirit, mission, execution, success and happiness to help create sustainable, empowering, *united* cultures of joy and purpose at work, school, home and community. A karaoke rocker, dancer, archer, football fanatic and cartoonist, he has audiences singing, dancing, aiming, tackling and drawing upon their strengths. A tornado, breeze, and gentle wind *all in one*, Barry champions a practical and powerful message to the public, private *and* not-for-profit sectors... engaging audiences, with a bounty of humor, passion and integrity.



*All the best... Barry*



Barry also offers a keynote talk called *Heartprints™*, sharing the story in real time and real ways. You can find him at [www.epicengage.com](http://www.epicengage.com) or through these fine professional speaker organizations.