


THE TRAIG'HEN™ (CODE®)

Thoughts on Moving from Bullying to Bravery to Building Unity at School and Work

Barry Lewis Green





Before taking this journey, please note...

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Barry Lewis Green... The Unity Guy™



My Reason

bul·ly.

Noun

- a blustering, quarrelsome, overbearing person who habitually badgers and intimidates others.

Verb (used with object)

- to act the bully toward; intimidate; domineer.

Verb (used without object)

- to be loudly arrogant and overbearing.

Bullying. It seems, *ever increasingly*, that we are hearing about the actions and consequences of bullying. We are, far too often, hearing about people (young and not so) taking their own lives, apparently, and even understandably, despondent about treatment from others; treatment that somehow targets some sense of being and value.

I was bullied. That may not make me special in any real way. I would suggest many people have experienced bullying. As an educator and expert speaker on noble leadership these days, my core message is that *we all count, we all lead*. I believe this message to be most important when we look at the causes and consequences of bullying.

That being said, I write this short eBooklet in the hopes that it can connect with the three participants in this drama called bullying... those experiencing bullying directly, those practicing it, and those watching it happen. My deepest hope is to rip away some of the veils I believe leave bullying with us, year after year. It is my desire to steer our conversation to a place where we “see”; we see the what and why and where of bullying... and look at this issue with a fresh set of eyes, ears and hearts... witnessing our collective role and responsibility in addressing the ugliness that is bullying.

My Story

Yes, I was bullied.

I was born a somewhat audacious child, curious and often creative. My years from 0-12, those I can remember... they were, *as I remember*, filled with moments where I was an explorer of sorts. I remember at age 3, being found by my mother, chasing after a plane. I remember around the age of 4, standing in our doorway, amazed by thunder and lightning; not fearful but enthralled. I remember games, imaginative and “out of the box”. I even remember saying what was on my mind to the adults in my life. I was not mean spirited but I said what was on my mind; my truth. I expressed myself in words, pictures and actions.

I remember one deep and cool conversation with a friend in Grade 6, in preparation for our journey to our next school and Grade 7. We sat and talked about the pressures we would face; to smoke and try various substances. I remember the pact we made that we would not fall prey. We were indeed noble little souls. 😊

Then, I remember Grade 7.

I entered Grade 7 with that idealism and audacity, but nervous as any kid going into a new school, much further from home than ever before. Most importantly, I remember the environment into which I walked.

I can still see our Common Room, that place where we convened at beginning of day, during breaks and even lunches. It housed both our lockers and huge benches that looked solid but were actually not. Underneath, they were hollow, with slightly open ends... *just enough*.

Enough? Yes, enough.

You see, I remember lockers rigged for books to fall. I remember laughter, the kind of laughter that is not joyful, but born of a mean spirit. I remember each morning worrying whether my locker would be “hit” that morning.

And those benches; yes, *those* benches. They were used by certain guys to place other boys underneath; their bodies fully captured and only their heads remaining outside... and how many slaps were taken at those heads. Though I never suffered that fate, I saw it, far too often... and it struck fear within me.

Fear. It captured me. It held me captive. I dreaded going to school. Truth be known, there were moments where I wished myself to die.

How could this be? How could this happen? How could such acts of bullying be so common place, so prevalent... so much of the culture... that kids lived in fear of going to school? Yes indeed, how *could* this happen? Who was not seeing this?

Which brings me to my real story.

One day, after surviving the morning unscathed, I ended up in gym class. While I carry some weight in my life these days (now engaging a process to get back to my health), I carried none in Grade 7. I was not an athlete, but I was active and I enjoyed sports. That day, I found myself in gym class, and we were *doing laps*. A good friend of mine was running just ahead of me, and our gym teacher thought he was not running fast enough. That teacher's method of motivation was to say something to the effect that my friend needed to "pick it up" all the while he extended his leg to trip my classmate... just as *a lesson*, I would gather. I was running so closely behind that I never saw that coming and tripped over my friend.

When I fell, I hurt something.

I did not know what, and I walked home that day... a full 30 minutes, in pain, holding books. My mother took me to the hospital and we discovered that I had a broken wrist. I was in such pain.

The pain was not so much with the wrist. The real pain came from the fear of what the kids at school would say. What would be the *Common Room* response? I could only imagine, but I could imagine much; and I worried that night, so *very much*.

I remember going into school that morning. I remember seeing that group of kids, the ones I feared. I heard the snickers. I felt crushed, having my worst fears realized. I truly wanted to die; and then *it* happened.

Those same kids did not come over to me. The gym teacher had walked into the Common Room. Saved! Saved! Saved? No. They walked over to him and I heard what they had to say. I remember the words so clearly. It went something like this.

"Sir, ya hear what happened to Green?"

And from the mouth of sir... "Yeah, what a woos (spelling?)."

Now, I *felt* crushed; *more* than crushed. I felt that I was truly of no worth. I walked home that day in tears ... feeling so very empty.

End of story? Clearly not.

At this time in my life, like many kids, I was exploring who I was... and Grade 7 was sending a clear message from some students and at least one teacher that I did not count. Around me, I saw no hope to survive. At 13, school seems like your whole world of existence. Yes, I had my friends “on the street” but so many hours each day, I was living with fear that I was “less” than; in school.

That afternoon, as I walked home, my head and heart were a swirl with so many thoughts and feelings. Fear. Despondency. Sadness. So much pain. But, there was something else... a seed of anger. Yes, that afternoon, as I reached home, amidst tears and fears, a sense of righteous anger grew within me. Something inside of me started screaming out that no one defines me. No one defines me, but me!

I heard it, growing louder. Something inside was saying just because they think you are stupid does not make you stupid. I heard “just because they don’t see you as strong, doesn’t mean you aren’t strong... it only means they are not yet strong enough to see how strong you truly are”. That message started resonating. “No kid or teacher will ever make me feel this way again!”, I declared to myself. In so many ways, it was my own personal declaration of independence.

That being said, my life did not change on a dime. It did not become gloriously different overnight. There was a struggle; but the struggle says “I am a fighter, resilient, strong and noble”. The struggle is the proof.

~~There were many other factors playing into that decision that day...~~ the food for stories down the road. Still the core of that decision really centered around the realization that other’s opinions are not what defines us. *We define us.*

I have not seen that teacher since Grade 9. I can tell you that I grew more resilient in his classes. Do I thank him? God no! Still, it took that moment in time for me to get clear on who defines my value.

Since that time, some 41 years (eeeeek) ago... I have worked increasingly towards a space where I live my life my way. Yes, *increasingly*, part of my message to others... and now with campuses, companies and communities on matters of leadership and unity building.... is that *we all count and we all lead*. That starts with the realization that *we all count*.

The kid, the ring leader of those kids, so many years ago... he committed suicide some 10 -15 years back. I was saddened when I heard that. It caused me to think how many of us, those bullying and being bullied... and those just watching... how many of us lived with our own fears of worthlessness and *seeming* inability to make change happen. How many of us are trapped in the thought that that is the way it is and that is the way I am?

My Point

If you have not already guessed, my point, *at core*, is that we all count. We *all* count.

Those of us who felt the daggers of bullying and continue to feel them, *we count*.

Those who witness, and either do nothing or encourage the bullying, *you count*.

Those who initiate the bullying, *you count*.

You may have noticed that I choose not to call *anyone* “a bully”. What I have learned in life is that we often live up or down to our reputations. As an educator, I have never had a “bad student”. As an employer, I have never had a “problem employee”. To believe I do impacts how I treat others and that can encourage whatever I believe.

I am no saint. I am not perfect. I struggle.

Still, what I have come to realize is that *behaviour is not character*. Those who bully have learned this behaviour, somewhere. This is NOT a problem solely in our schools and with our youth. We have co-workers who bully, parents who bully, bosses who bully, friends who bully. We have television shows that glamorize bullying and mean spiritedness. Even many of our commercials, ever so subtly send the message that we get what we want by being mean or bullying.

We need to consider what we are reinforcing. We need to understand that behavior can be redirected and changed, for the better. My work as a Master Facilitator with The Virtues Project™ (www.virtuesproject.com) internationally has driven this home for me.

The premise of The Virtues Project™ is that we are born noble, capable of accessing a full range of virtues or strengths as human beings. Often times, we are encouraged as children, male or female, to exhibit certain virtues more than others. Still, we can practice virtues to develop them. I have seen it happen, naturally *and* through training.

Those who are often bullied, inherently possess and manifest virtues like gentleness and caring, and humility. Often times, we are seen as “weak” or “soft”. *Nonsense*. It takes great strength to care. Caring and gentleness *are* virtues. Those of us strong in these virtues, we need to balance them with assertiveness and strength, *both* virtues.

Those of us who practice bullying, show virtues of assertiveness and decisiveness, but are in need of balancing those with compassion and caring. Those watching and doing nothing, may possess any range of virtues, but need practice justice and courage to take action.

When I work with schools and youth on this message, I say... *we all count*. We need those who are bullying... that we recognize your strengths and we recognize where you need to work; balancing assertiveness with compassion can produce amazing leaders. We need *you*, and we need you to go from bullying to bravery.

In those sessions I ask that those being bullied realize that part of their battle is to develop assertiveness and decisiveness... deciding that they define their own worth... not others... students and/or teachers alike. We need you. We need you to move from victim to victory through your increasing belief in your own value. You define you.

Ultimately my point is that brandishing labels of bullies and victims and witnesses gives us all labels to which we seem expected to live up or down. *I am done with labels*. Every student in every school *counts*. Everyone in that office *counts*. Everyone in the community *counts*. Humor that attacks that notion is not the humor I wish in my life. Stereotypes that encourage a culture of division have no welcomed spot in my life.

Am I excusing bullying? God, no. It must end. Still, bullying the bullies, demanding that they be “dealt” with is not the battle I believe we must engage.

I am strong. I am assertive. I like being me. I believe I have compassion and caring. I believe in people. Period. I think that our truest battle in dealing with bullying is understanding that we are all susceptible to the desire to feel better about ourselves. Some of us have learned that the only way to do that is to make others feel weak or less important. We need to show a better way.

My mission is to redefine “cool” Cool is justice and strength and caring and doing what is right. Cool is vision and passion and believing in oneself despite what others might think. Cool is standing out, not fitting in... while still working together. Cool, is diversity and difference and we need each other. Cool is we all count and we are all different We can have different viewpoints and still allow one another the right to exist and live.

That is cool.

The Code

So, what *is* The Traig'hen Code™?

At the risk of being open and honest *and* authentic, part of my youthful journey in response to my world was that I dreamed. A core dream for me growing up, and *before* Star Wars and Jedi, was a world of existence that included a concept called Traig'hen™. Traig'hen™ were noble, just, wise, strong, and compassionate warriors who were protectors and guardians of a Code... a Code that confirmed the nobility of being human. Maybe one day, I will share more of *that* story, but, for now, suffice it to say that that dream helped me to gain my feet and build a sense of being that *made* sense to me and *for* me. I was not manufacturing Barry, but getting back to Barry, through this Code.

Years later, upon discovering The Virtues Project™, I realized that the Code was really about the recognition of the nobility *of us all*... that we not only count, but that we must lead... and we do so best by living the virtues. For more on that, check out the Resources on the last page of this eBooklet.

That being said, The Traig'hen Code™ was based, in part, on six core virtues that I found useful on my own journey from bullying to bravery to building unity. You can check their meanings out by clicking [here](#). I hope these help to start a daring dialogue and discussion.

Nobility.

Love.

Honor.

Idealism.

Unity.

Zeal.

In addition and in support of this, as a youth in the 70's I remember a popular piece of music set to the following writing. That writing now hangs in my living room as an extension of The Traig'hen Code™. I love these words and hope you do too.

Desiderata by Max Ehrmann

Go placidly amid the noise and haste, and remember what peace there may be in silence.

As far as possible, without surrender, be on good terms with all persons. Speak your truth quietly and clearly; and listen to others, even to the dull and the ignorant, they too have their story. Avoid loud and aggressive persons, they are vexatious to the spirit.

If you compare yourself with others, you may become vain and bitter; for always there will be greater and lesser persons than yourself. Enjoy your achievements as well as your plans. Keep interested in your own career, however humble; it is a real possession in the changing fortunes of time.

Exercise caution in your business affairs, for the world is full of trickery. But let this not blind you to what virtue there is; many persons strive for high ideals, and everywhere life is full of heroism. Be yourself. Especially, do not feign affection. Neither be cynical about love, for in the face of all aridity and disenchantment it is perennial as the grass.

Take kindly to the counsel of the years, gracefully surrendering the things of youth. Nurture strength of spirit to shield you in sudden misfortune. But do not distress yourself with imaginings. Many fears are born of fatigue and loneliness.

Beyond a wholesome discipline, be gentle with yourself. You are a child of the universe, no less than the trees and the stars; you have a right to be here. And whether or not it is clear to you, no doubt the universe is unfolding as it should.

Therefore be at peace with God, whatever you conceive Him to be, and whatever your labors and aspirations, in the noisy confusion of life, keep peace in your soul.

With all its sham, drudgery and broken dreams, it is still a beautiful world.

Be cheerful. Strive to be happy.

For the curious 😊

Some of you, by now, may be wondering why the pictures of land and water and sky.

First, these are pictures of one of my favorites places in the world... Gros Morne... a world renowned UNESCO site. This a place where rock from miles underneath the planet surface has risen, through the shifting of plates. It is a place that symbolizes the power of showing who we are undersneath. It is also a place of my spirit.

I have often described myself as “of the land, wind and water”. Indeed today, this day of first finishing this eBooklet... November 11, 2011... at the 11th second, of the 11th minute of the 11th hour, of the 11th day, of the 11th month in the 11th year (11:11:11:11:11;11... and no, I am not into numerology but THIS was cool) I found myself at my favorite piece of shore (Cape Spear) amidst these three elements. It was very cool. But, in relation to these 3 forces, I have learned how to stand, and spin, and soar... and I continue to learn. I love to have my feet on the ground, while being unconstrained as the wind in my imagining of a better world... and to have the flow, depth and true power of water.

This place is magic to me and I *hope* you have enjoyed the pictures in some fashion.

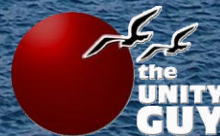
In closing this eBooklet, let me say that I believe in you, whoever you really are. Your journey is yours. I believe that we each have one. I believe that our best journeys are greatly served as we see each other as people who count. I believe that our journeys are best served as we live our noble birthright... as we more and more live the virtues.

I stand ready to serve on this journey in any way that I can. But if we should never meet, know that I believe in you, *the best you*. That is not cliche. That is *my* truth and, like the early child I was, I have, once again, spoken it. 😊

You rock... I rock... we rock!

Rock on!

Barry Lewis Green, aka **The Unity Guy™**



RESOURCES Online

Our Websites

- EPIC Engagement
- The Virtues Project™

Some Cool Videos

- [Away from the Sun](#)
- [It's Not My Time](#)
- [Rise Above This](#)
- [Bully](#)
- [The Hugs Campaign](#)

A BIT ON BARRY



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Barry and EPIC Engagement work 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 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.

