



Power Outage

By Steven L. Anderson, Ph.D., MBA

Huge storm, in the middle of the night, a few weeks ago. Loud. Power went off. Very frustrating! 'Why me?', I thought. Three am. Guess I will have to hook up the generator so we can have a few lights and run some fans. It was 90 degrees outside. "Why me?" I am tired. Why did this storm have to hit now? I want to sleep. But I got up. "Where the heck is the flashlight?" I thought. Oh well, I will work without it. I got up and stumbled out to the shed and got out the generator. Hooked it up. Plugged in some extension cords and fired it up. Then my daughter showed up, one notorious for not putting things away. "Have you seen the flashlight?", I inquired. "Yes", she said, "I have it." My frustration with the situation boiled over. "Put things away when you are done with them!" I yelled. "But Dad, I just got it..." she replied. "I don't care I replied. Put it back when you are done with it!" Man I get tired of teenagers, I thought.

What I didn't realize is that she had gotten up thirty minutes before me and needed the flashlight to go to the bathroom. It wasn't realistic to assume that she would put it back where it belonged in the middle of the night. But I wasn't to be deterred. I was irritated with her and she was going to hear about it. She did. Man did it feel good to unload on her!

Thirty minutes later, laying in bed under the cool breeze created by our bedroom fan. "I think you were too hard on Julie," my wife said. I thought about it for a minute. She was right. In my frustration I needed someone to blame. I was wrong and I knew it. I went in to Julie's room and apologized. She accepted. Great kid! Thank goodness for storms in the middle of the night. They give us an opportunity to become better people.

So often we wish the minor irritations of our life would go away. Life's tough enough without them. But we need them. We need them. In the irritation of unexpected stress we have the opportunity to move to the next level as leaders. Be ready for your next storm. It may be just the gift you need to move to the next level.