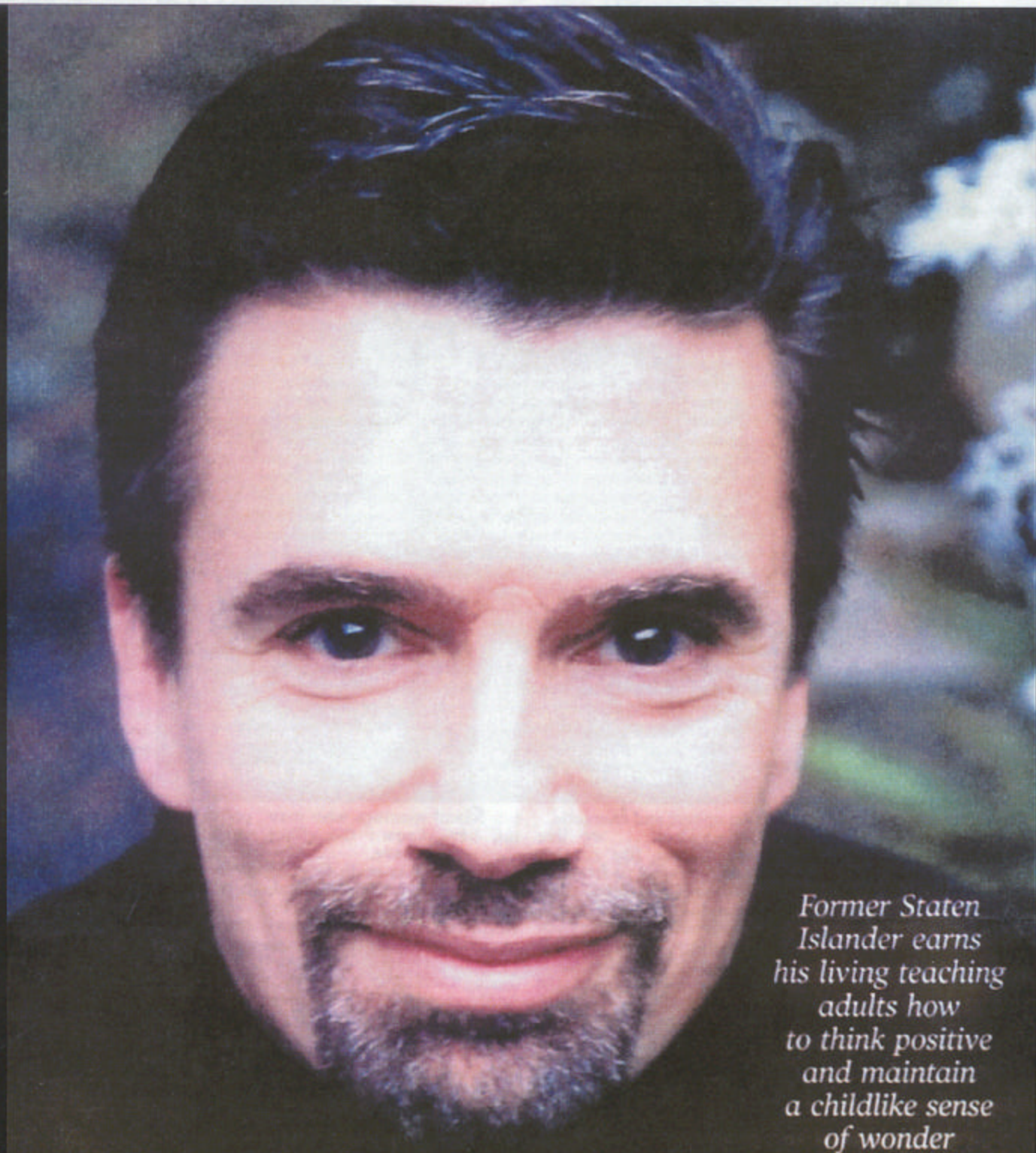


# LIFESTYLE

STATEN ISLAND ADVANCE

SECTION E  
THURSDAY, MAY 13, 2004



*Former Staten  
Islander earns  
his living teaching  
adults how  
to think positive  
and maintain  
a childlike sense  
of wonder*

## Agent of change

# Agent of change has roots on Staten Island



PHOTO COURTESY OF JOHN IZZO

John Izzo's grandfather, Henry Turple, was a ship-builder, whose life was a constant example of giving. John Izzo never forgot the day he and his grandfather rowed out under the Bayonne Bridge to view a sunset.



CALVARY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Rev. Robert Kelley, a former pastor at Calvary Presbyterian Church, West Brighton, was the person who steered John Izzo into the ministry.

By LISA ANN WILLIAMSON  
STATEN ISLAND ADVANCE

John Izzo had come to a midpoint in his life; he was moved to review his experiences in an effort to pinpoint what he learned. He looked around him.

He noticed many adults who had become bored with life, jaded or overly cynical. Some had stopped believing in miracles. They no longer knew that they could make a difference. Their youthful zest to make the world a better place had disappeared.

Then he looked at children, who lived only to discover and explore, whose days were steeped in wonder. Izzo thought back to his own childhood, growing up on Staten Island, and suddenly everything became clear: The key to renewed energy, lust for life and excitement lay in cultivating that child-like sense of joy. Wonder hadn't wandered; it was just not being tapped.

Izzo, 46, a native of Staten Island, is now a corporate life coach, motivational speaker, advisor to top companies and an author. He spoke to the Advance during a media tour in Chicago to promote his new book, "Second Innocence: Rediscovering Joy and Wonder."

Izzo believes it is in a state of wonder that people can make a difference in the



PHOTO COURTESY OF JOHN IZZO

John Izzo, second from left, once served as one of the editors of the 'Richmondtown Crier,' the newspaper at Richmondtown Preparatory High School on Staten Island.

world, grow as individuals and inspire others.

"There are some very hopeful things in terms of trends that are going on in the world. I am one of the few who believes the world is getting better," he said citing more people in the world living in democracy, the absence of slavery, women gaining more rights in America and children no longer working in coal mines. "We've made tremendous amounts of progress."

We each have a responsibility to continue to make changes for the better, Izzo said.

His has focused on the corporate world, where he helps

the front-office types dogs create a work place in which employees feel fulfilled and creative.

"I help people find more soul in their work and their life," Izzo said. "The challenge is to accelerate the trends, foster peace."

"The largest part of society is in the middle of their lives," Izzo said. "We are at the stage of life when we come to a fork. You can age and become cynical. Or you can become inspiring and optimistic and your spirit grows."

It's not only for ourselves that we recapture innocence,

## Who he counsels

Clients include: IBM, the Mayo Clinic, Applebee's International, AT&T, Xerox, Coca-Cola, General Motors, CIGNA, Toys R Us, Marriott Hotels, Dow Chemical, Deloitte and Touche and the New York Society of Association Executives.

## Other publications

Look for "Values Shift: The New Work Ethic and What it Means for Business" with Pam Withers; "Awakening the Corporate Soul" with Eric Klein; and "Awakening the Corporate Soul Companion Workbook" with Eric Klein and Marion Baker.

## To learn more

You can contact John Izzo through his Web site at [www.izzoconsulting.com](http://www.izzoconsulting.com)

Second Innocence: Rediscovering Joy and Wonder: A Guide to Renewal in Work, Relationships and Daily Life



Available in bookstores nationwide and through Amazon.com  
\$14.95, paperback

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but for humanity.

"From a bigger perspective, maybe all of evolution is on the line," he said. "This is a time for us to be a little more optimistic and innocent."

Izzo knew as a pre-teen that he wanted to change the world, and he has gotten about the business using slick, polished presentations designed to keep corporate types fresh and exciting.

He is the author of three other books, including the best-seller, "Awakening Corporate Soul: Four Paths to Unleash the Power of People at Work."

For the past 17 years, the former Presbyterian minister has been front-and-center in the corporate pulpit, serving as a consultant and coach for top-name companies like Hewlett Packard, IBM, Toys R Us and Coca-Cola.

Izzo maintains a busy speaking and workshop schedule eight months of the year, visiting some 80 corporations and conventions. His presentation is a combination motivational speaker and storyteller.

His advice appears to be highly valued, with blue-chip businesses paying as much as \$15,000 per appearance. Izzo also offers two-day corporate retreats and workshops. Fees vary for non-profit and profit organizations. He sets aside about four months to focus on home, family and writing.

Izzo says his coaching is essential because it takes work for adults to fight routine and

remain upbeat and energetic.

"As children ... we live protected lives, like royalty, as parents protect us from the world's harsher truths," Izzo writes in his newest book. "As we mature, our innocence meets disappointment, embarrassment, scientific fact, betrayal, financial concerns and so on, and our natural innocence slowly slips away from us."

"The hard things start to cut in on your dance," said Izzo, who now works out of Vancouver, British Columbia, where his wife, Leslie Nolin-Izzo, grew up.

He may have moved cross-country, but the groundwork for "Second Innocence," said Izzo, was laid when he was just 8 years old and called to his West Brighton home on Elm Street early from a baseball game. His mother told him that his father, then 36, had died suddenly.

That was his first hard truth, and it was followed by others, like the death of his girlfriend at age 19, the suicide of an aunt, a divorce, hostile takeovers at companies.

"If you think about it, we don't have a lot of control about what life gives us. We have total control over what we give," said Izzo, who once worked as an Advance teen reporter and was editor of the Richmondtown Crier, the school newspaper of Richmondtown Preparatory School.

In his book, Izzo recounts 30 years of lessons from Sta-

ten Island mentors who may not have known the effect they were to have.

There was a math teacher at Prall Intermediate School, West Brighton, Mr. Thom, who despite being mild-mannered and slight of build, stepped in to save a man's life during a school brawl.

There was his grandfather, Henry Turple, a shipbuilder, whose life, says Izzo, was a constant example of giving; he often invited the homeless to eat when he had very little himself. Izzo recalls that when he was 15, his grandfather invited him out on a row boat to take in a glorious sunset over the Arthur Kill, near the Bayonne Bridge. Izzo rowed and rowed, disgruntled. He was tired and sweaty, but, indeed, he did see a beautiful sunset. Five minutes later, his granddad told him to row back. There had been so much effort for such seemingly little reward. But, a kernel of wisdom had been planted.

"Most of life is rowing and if you don't learn to be good at it — and enjoy — the rowing, you will grow up to be a very unhappy man," Izzo wrote.

And there was Robert Kelley, a former minister at Calvary Presbyterian Church in West Brighton, who had "tremendous social consciousness."

Izzo once thought he'd be a foreign correspondent for a newspaper, an attorney or

politician, but after many conversations with Rev. Kelley, he changed course. He was ordained at Calvary after receiving his master's degree in theology and divinity from the University of Chicago. Later he earned a doctorate in organizational management from Kent State University in Ohio. His career today is a marriage of the two disciplines.

"He inspired me to believe that if you are fully engaged in the world, you could change things," Izzo said.

Izzo has been inspired by inanimate objects as well — a steep, snowy driveway that looked too impossible to clear until his wife and 12-year-old son demonstrated that by chipping away at the task, things get done.

Even trees had something to teach him.

"Every year we have to let go of the past, as trees shed the leaves," said Izzo. "Look at the hard things and ask 'what have I learned from these things?'"

Even if we don't have the perfect job we dreamed of, or the bank account we desired, at the end of each day we can "recall one or two ways that you made a difference," said Izzo.

And that, in turn, will change the world.

Lisa Ann Williamson is a feature reporter at the Staten Island Advance. She can be contacted at [williamson@siadvance.com](mailto:williamson@siadvance.com).

# Agent of change

## John Izzo at a glance

John Izzo was inspired as a child growing up on Staten Island to change the world. These days, he's a West Coast guy, based in Canada. Here's a quick look at the man and how to learn more about him.

## Who he is

John Izzo, 46, is president and chief executive officer of Izzo Consulting, Inc. He is also the author of "Second Innocence: Rediscovering Joy and Wonder."



## A bit of background

John Izzo, shown here at age 8, was born on Staten Island and raised in West Brighton. These days, he lives outside Vancouver, British Columbia with his wife, Leslie Nolin-Izzo, and their children Lena, 16, Carter, 14 and Sydney, 10.

## What he does

Izzo Consulting, Inc. offers leadership, development and corporate retention programs to businesses and organizations. Retreats and workshops are designed to help employers create an environment that encourages employees to be innovative, to work with a sense of purpose and to achieve excellence. Izzo is a presenter and keynote speaker. He and his team offer strategies for renewing passion, focusing on goals for life and increasing productivity and joy at work.