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CHAIRPERSON'S CORNER

You're the (Leadership) Inspiration

By Kelly Hennigan

Welcome to the first 2016 issue of *The Stepping Stone*!

As many of you are likely aware, the Board of Directors of the Society of Actuaries approved a name change for this section effective September 2015—moving from the Management & Personal Development (MPD) Section to the Leadership & Development (L&D) Section. The rationale for this rebranding included:

- Replacing “Management” with “Leadership” encourages participation from both managers and non-managers. In the past, some (incorrectly) believed that the MPD Section was only accessible to those who were managers. We intend to address all leaders, not just those in a managerial role.
- Utilizing the stand-alone term “Development,” rather than “Personal Development,” reinforces our intent to offer resources supporting both personal and professional development.

- Shortening the name of the section avoids the use of the not-widely-recognized “MPD” acronym.

The L&D Section will continue to plan, implement and actively promote management and business skill development using a variety of channels. The new name truly aligns with the section's mission statement and reflects our future direction.

In anticipation of the name change, during summer 2015 the L&D Section held a Leadership Inspiration Contest. Entrants were asked to tell us in 250–500 words what inspired them to be a better actuarial leader based around five different categories: an inspiring leadership quote, book/song, admirable leader/personal mentor, defining moment/event in their career, or any other leadership inspiration.

The L&D Section Council discovered that our section members are inspired via different channels, as we received a number of submissions for each of the categories. Selected entries will be published throughout 2016 issues of *The Stepping Stone*. We hope you enjoy reading these articles written by your colleagues as much as we did.

We would like to congratulate the winners of the Leadership Inspiration Contest, as follows:

- Best Overall Submission—\$250 Amazon gift card
 - o Jeffrey Stock



- Category Winners—\$50 Amazon gift card
 - o Leadership Quote—Brian Hinkle
 - o Book/Song—Tim Paris
 - o Admirable Leader/Personal Mentor—John Schumacher
 - o Defining Moment/Event—Joanne Ryan
 - o Other Leadership Inspiration—Alan Gard
- First qualifying submissions (eight awarded due to eligibility)—\$25 Amazon gift card
 - o Carlos Arocha, Juan Arroyo, Ed Bonach, Stephanie Calandro, Mary Pat Campbell, Gregory Fann, Tamar Miller and Fraser Smart

Thank you to all who participated!

As we enter 2016, I encourage our section members to consider their leadership and developmental aspirations for the new year—both personally and professionally. While in actuality we can set these targets at any point during the calendar year, the start of a brand new year traditionally seems to be an appropriate time to reflect and reset. By the time many of you read this article in February, it is very possible that your New Year's resolutions have already been broken!

In order to effectively commit to your resolutions and aspire to attaining your goals in 2016, it can be helpful to focus on a single goal at a time. While doing so, ask yourself the following questions to appropriately frame the situation you are in and the future state you are targeting:

1. Have you specifically defined your goal?
2. Why do you wish to achieve this goal?
3. What is the result of accomplishing (or not accomplishing) your goal?
4. How do you measure success along the way to achieving your goal? What are possible obstacles to overcome?
5. What is exciting about accomplishing your goal, or, alternatively, frightening about not being able to?
6. Who is aware of (or needs to buy into) your goal? Similarly, who (or what) might hinder you from accomplishing your goal?
7. What resources will help you to attain your goal?
8. Do you have a set deadline within which you want to accomplish your goal?

“Also keep in mind the possibility of a role reversal—as there are times when you’re the (leadership) inspiration that another is seeking!”

In considering these questions, and in reading through the Leadership Inspiration Contest entries, perhaps you will begin to discover unexpected conduits of leadership inspiration to propel you toward reaching your aspirations. Also keep in mind the possibility of a role reversal—as there are times when you’re the (leadership) inspiration that another is seeking! It is mutually beneficial to invest the time into fostering mentor/mentee relationships with those in similar career tracks, within your companies, and within your broader communities. In the words of Robin S. Sharma, writer, speaker and leadership expert:

Leadership is not about a title or a designation. It's about impact, influence and inspiration. Impact involves getting results, influence is about spreading the passion you have for your work, and you have to inspire teammates and customers.

In conclusion, I would like to welcome our newly elected L&D Section Council members: Carlos Arocha, Anne Katcher and Joanne Ryan. And, I want to thank those who recently finished their three-year terms with the section in 2015: Sophia Dao, our prior chairperson; Karin Swenson-Moore, our prior secretary/treasurer; and Sarah Osborne. We have benefited from and very much appreciated their leadership inspiration to the L&D Section over the last three years. ■



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