



SOCIETY OF ACTUARIES

Article from:

# News Direct Newsletter

May 2004 – Issue No. 47

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## INSPIRATION

The topic of inspiration has been the subject of writing, conjecture and mythology for centuries. It might even be (somewhat circularly) suggested that the concept of inspiration itself has historically been an important inspiration.

Inspiration is one of those ephemeral subjects that can only be described by studying its origins, effects and results.

First, where does inspiration come from? The concept of a supreme being has been one of the most durable, pervasive of inspirations. Love, revenge and greed have inspired some of the most memorable (and notorious) acts throughout history.

My aunt was somehow inspired to become a missionary and spend many years in Pakistan and Bangladesh. While she obviously did not reach the same level of notoriety as Mother Teresa, it is clear a similar force inspired them.

John Lennon was inspired to write a song about a drawing his daughter created in grade school (Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds). Beethoven was inspired by a walk on a spring day to write a symphony (Pastoral). So, we see that inspiration can come from many sources. And, the resultant acts are equally varied.

However impressive the results of the above inspirations, more interesting to me are those inspirations that occur within most of us from time to time. They lead us to do many small deeds and sometimes larger ones.

What inspires you to shovel your neighbor's walk when you know he is away on business? What inspires you to give your time, talents and energy to your local community or little league team? Why do we develop our knowledge and talents just to pass the fruits along to our friends, co-workers and (especially) our children?

This actuary's opinion is that a desire lies within all of us to make the world (or our little corner of it) a better place.

Inspiration like this also brings us success as a section. Contributions from inspired people like Diane McGovern (spring meeting coordinator), Steve Konnath (annual meeting), Rob Stone (Product Development Symposium), Nancy Manning and Brian Louth (*NewsDirect* editors) and the NTM Council are what make up our section's contribution to the profession.

I hope that if a similar inspiration strikes you (maybe while you read this), you are also provided with the energy and opportunity to act on it.

If that inspiration happens to direct you to write a *NewsDirect* article or contribute to our section in other ways, I look forward to the opportunity to work with you. If it leads you in another direction, well then, thank you for making the world just a little bit better.



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