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From the Editor

Rekindling Your Passion

by David C. Miller



David C. Miller, FSA, MSCC, is a professional business coach who works with actuaries, consultants and sales professionals who are struggling to attract enough clients. He conducts seminars and one-on-one coaching in business development, influence, leadership and career enhancement.

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On a scale of one to 10 (with 10 being the highest), how would you rank your level of passion for what you do? My sense is that for many actuaries, this number would be a five or lower. For most, it's not a job that causes them to jump out of bed and rush to work each morning. This impression first hit me like a ton of bricks over a decade ago, while attending an SOA meeting. At the general session, the speaker asked the audience (numbering easily over 1,000) to raise their hands if they wanted their children to follow in their footsteps. Probably less than 20 people raised their hands! What a statement as to how many actuaries view their careers.

As a business and life coach, it's not uncommon for me to be working with professionals who have lost their passion for their career or practice. At one time, usually when they begin their venture (or is it "adventure"?), they were full of passion, excitement and creativity. Now their professional life has become routine and mundane. They've lost their heart for what they do.

Others have never known passion when it comes to their profession. The idea of simultaneously "doing what you love" and "making a living" is foreign to them. It's unobtainable.

Many have bought into the myth that you can't support your life doing what you love. So they resign themselves to earning a living and looking for adventure outside the workplace. They believe that the price they pay for their success is to let go of their passion. This usually occurs over a span of years and comes on in a subtle manner. It's not that you feel miserable about what you do—no, it's a respectable job and you feel good because you're providing for your family. On the other hand, it's not something you're jumping up and down about. So what's the answer?

The remedy for lost passion for your profession comes down to your vision of what you're about and who you're going to be in this world. I tell my clients that "the size of your passion is limited to be the size of your vision." Your passion is lacking because your vision is small.

Is your career "a job that pays the bills" or is it a "mission (or calling)"? A large vision is one that inspires us. What is it that inspires us? The answer: being part of something that's bigger than ourselves. Deep down we all want to play a bigger game. That's what creating a huge vision all is about.

This is a vast topic to explore, but as a starting point here are some questions to help you develop inspiration:

- What are the big problems that you really care about in your organization?
- What are the big sources of stress, strain or struggle?
- How does this impact you personally?
- How can you be an agent of change in this situation?
- Who do you want to be in this life? How can you unleash the full expression of who you are into your workplace?

Here's the principle: when you see a need and it becomes a cause, your level of passion will rise. Hint: You know you've really found it if it's somewhat scary to you!

It's interesting that just about every article submitted in this issue follows similar themes: finding your passion, enhancing your image, stretching to the next level, etc. This makes me believe that there is a growing awareness and desire for actuaries to step up and make a bigger impact in their organizations and consulting practices.

As you read the articles in this issue, my hope is that it stirs in you the desire to seek a bigger vision for your career and your life! □

