

True Stories



When Rick Matthews was a young man in Southern California he never thought about the need for life or disability insurance protection. "For a while, I didn't have a stitch of insurance on me," he said. But the sudden death of a close friend got his attention. "It takes something like that for a hardhead like me," he said.



That was some 30 years ago. In the meantime, Rick married, started a concrete contracting business, and raised two sons. Early on, he met insurance agent Ron Forney and decided to buy some coverage.

"When you work for yourself, you're not under anybody's wing but your own," said Rick. Ron started him with a \$100,000 life insurance policy and sold him some disability coverage. By the late 1980s, Rick had increased his disability coverage to reflect the growing financial needs of his family and business.

But when an economic downturn hit Rick's business in the early 1990s, he almost decided to drop his disability coverage. "It came pretty close," Rick recalled. "Ron called me on the last day of the grace period, pretty much at the last hour. I thought, hell, we'll try another year." Rick has never regretted the decision.

About a year ago, Rick had double bypass surgery and had both legs amputated below the knee due to circulatory complications brought on by his heart condition. When Ron visited him at the hospital, Rick grabbed his hand and said, "Thanks for making me keep that disability policy. You said I might need it some day." Both men broke down in tears.

At 55, Rick is learning to walk again, and says he's doing well. He and his family were paid a lump-sum benefit from The Principal Financial Group and will continue to receive monthly disability payments of \$4,700 until Rick turns 65. The disability provision in his life insurance policy waived any future premiums. Rick and his family have been able to maintain their lifestyle, and his boys, 31 and 29, now run the business. As Rick put it, "I answer a few questions and lead them through the trees."

His philosophy has come full circle. "You realize that life is just a whisper, and then you're gone," he said. "I'm not one to give advice, but insurance sure worked well for me. Without it, I would've been in a pickle."