When I was a child, I had a very vivid imagination. I could occupy myself for hours at a time imagining what I was going to do or who I wanted to be. I also always had a fascination with magic. I thought about the legendary Houdini and the amazing illusions that he would create. I always would wonder how the illusion was created, considering it had defied logic. As I grew up, I realized that magic was but a form of entertainment, but what it required for the act to be successful was for the illusion to look real. It required an audience to believe that what they were seeing with their own eyes was real. I was that audience that believed—not because I was gullible or easy to deceive. But, because I wanted to believe that it was real.

As I was later confronted with the debilitating disease of juvenile diabetes, I had convinced myself to believe that I could overcome it. The same ability to imagine that I had as a lad became my source of empowerment to overcome the adversity I was forced to face as a teenager. I realize now that if I had doubted or been skeptical about the prospect of not overcoming the odds, there would have been no chance for success to have occurred. It was my belief system that had saved me, and ultimately, I trace that belief system to my early belief of wonderment and magic.

So now, when I ask “Do you believe in magic?” It should have a very different ring to it. It’s like saying “Do you believe in miracles?” I say, “Yes!”

**DO YOU BELIEVE IN MAGIC?**
As a steel company, we store some structural materials outside in an open yard. This is quite common in our industry. Since our rainfall is rather limited, Southern California is fortunate to have many businesses with operations located outdoors. This works most years, except in an El Niño year. In preparation, many businesses have to file a storm water run-off plan to show where the water flows. Most of it ends up in drains and waterways that lead to the ocean.

So what can you do in preparation for this historic El Niño? I think first and foremost is to be mindful and safe about the rainfall. As we rely on our cars for transportation, be mindful that driving in wet weather is not something we get to practice much. As water builds up, it makes sense to stay away from pooling water. It can rise really quickly, and before you know it, your automobile can become submerged. You don't want to be one of those idiots on the evening news climbing out of your car. As for your business, tarps can be your best friend in keeping metals dry. We use them with nearly every delivery just in case. Keeping metal products dry is the goal.

Finally, this advice comes from my mother: Dress right and stay healthy. Use an umbrella, wear a hat and boots and buy a raincoat. It's always funny to me to see how unprepared we are for rain. On the news, we have "Storm Watch" at the first hint of weather. But, in my opinion, it's much safer! Let's be prepared and we'll send you a card to enjoy a Starbucks drink on us!

We'd love your feedback. E-mail it to JStavis@paragonsteel.com and then come back often!