

BBC RADIO ULSTER

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

Monday 19th December 2011

It's that time of the year when we look back and reflect on the past 12 months.

So who inspired you in 2011?

Perhaps it was the people of Japan, who suffered one of the worst natural disasters in history. Faced with the appalling tragedy of the earthquake, tsunami and nuclear meltdown, they began the enormous task of rebuilding.

The Japanese people have demonstrated the quiet resilient spirit expressed in one of their oldest proverbs which says:

'Fall seven times, stand up eight.'

Perhaps you were inspired by the achievements of a sportsperson in 2011. And we have a few heroic golfers round here to choose from.

Darren Clarke never gave up. After 20 years and 54 attempts to win a major, he achieved his lifelong ambition and won the 2011 Open Championship. His tenacity is as inspiring as his skill.

Sidney Sheldon wrote:

'Don't give up. There are too many nay-sayers out there who will try to discourage you. Don't listen to them. The only one who can make you give up is yourself.'

Of course, you may have been inspired by your favourite artist or musician in 2011. I know for a fact that my teenage daughter was greatly inspired by a certain Justin Beiber. And Justin himself believes we should never give up. To quote the lyrics I have heard many times echoing through my daughter's bedroom wall.

'Whenever you knock me down

I will not stay on the ground

Pick it up, pick it up

Up, up, up, up, up and never say never'

Of course the person who inspired you most in 2011 may not be famous at all.

You may have been inspired by a friend or a relative who has simply kept going in the face of poor health, or bereavement or financial hardship.

Or you may have been inspired by one of the many unsung and heroic volunteers who make such a difference in our local communities here.

If you want to be inspired by an ordinary person, search for 'Amazing Maisie' on Youtube.

Maisie DeVore, was an 83 year old woman, who collected and crushed aluminium cans for nearly 30 years to raise enough money for her dream of a community swimming pool in her town. They said she was crazy, they said it would never happen, they told her to give up. But Maisie just kept on going and today her town has a community swimming pool.

So as you look back on 2011 and look forward to 2012:

'Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.'