

QUESTION of the MONTH: 'How and when do you tell others about this Buddhism?'

In regards to sentient beings, I tell them about Buddhism whenever I meet them, by massaging their hearts with my eyes, my voice, or my thoughts. And if I am angry with, or upset by them, I try to do it with silent daimoku from my heart. In regards to insentient beings, I do it by trying to attune myself to the music emanating from their life.

— ALAIN BERGER, Van Nuys, Calif.

First, I chant quality daimoku for their happiness and mine. I do a vigorous morning and evening gongyo. But the real key is to muster up the courage of a lion and have the highest life-condition by being yourself. Because they have the potential to shine just like me.

— ANNETTE ALMANZA, Miami

I try to carry a current *Living Buddhism* and *World Tribune* with me wherever I go. Then I read them while at the health club, at work on my break or in line while waiting. Someone usually asks what I am reading and I have the opportunity to share about my Buddhist practice.

— SANDY TAYLOR, Bend, Ore.

“How” you tell others is demonstrated by your actions toward yourself (positive attitude in daily life, self-confidence that you can make your dreams, goals and aspirations become a reality, etc.) and toward others (compassion, concern, etc.). “When” you tell others...that’s the sticky point. Non-Buddhists may ask you about this Buddhism, but may not really want to hear your answer.... When I tell others about this Buddhism is when they keep nagging me about it. That shows me that they want to spend time really understanding what it’s all about, because as we all know, religion is a very serious matter (since it deals with one’s inner life).

— NAILAH BADERINWA, North Hollywood, Calif.

How. The first thing that I do is to offer my friendship and get to know that person. It can be a neighbor or a co-worker. Someone that you see every day at the bus stop, etc. I then gain that person’s trust and he or she will open up and tell me about his or her unhappiness. Be sure that the friendship comes from the heart. Show that you care with honesty, respect. Be unique. Be special to that person. When. After that person trusts you then is the time to tell that person about Nam-myoho-renge-kyo and remember that you are the model, that they are looking at you for good behavior.

— ELVIA NEWHALL, Anaheim, Calif.

I chant to be in tune and have a caring heart toward everyone. Then I can *feel* when the time is right to tell someone directly about Nam-myoho-renge-kyo. Anyone I meet, stranger or friends, somewhere along the way I tell them I’m a Buddhist.

— SHIRLEY ZAGOREC, Orlando, Fla.

Most of the people I’ve told about this Buddhism are located in other states or overseas. So I use telephone calls, taped recordings and the mail. After I talk to them on the phone, I follow up with a card with Nam-myoho-renge-kyo on it and a 30-minute tape of chanting so they can get the correct pronunciation. I also send them short articles I wrote on “What

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Is Buddhism?” and “How To Pray.” I follow up with books and publications. I encourage them to go to district meetings and give them the address and phone number of the nearest community center to them.

— DIANA NG, Santa Maria, Calif.

I have been practicing Buddhism now for eight months. I am chanting to receive the Gohonzon in March. It has been so natural to talk and live Buddhism. My friends start asking what is that big change? They are curious to participate, to know more about the philosophy. Or why I am so positive despite all the difficulties I have raising three kids alone. I am spreading Buddhism in a very natural way, living day by day as a Buddhist.

— MIRIAM MEZHER SILVA, N. Miami Beach, Fla.

Telling others about Nichiren Daishonin’s Buddhism should be done in as natural a way as possible, with genuine compassion for that person’s life and taking into account their individual circumstances. I personally pray to master Buddhist philosophy through study to further correctly comprehend, absorb and articulate the teachings to others in a straightforward, down-to-earth way.

— JOY WEST, Philadelphia

I chant for the opportunity and the wisdom to touch others’ hearts. Much of the time people initiate dialogue with me. Nichiren’s Buddhism is daily life, so invariably and naturally our discussion turns to Buddhism. I consider any setting appropriate and am careful not to appear fanatical. In the “Dialogue on the Lotus Sutra,” SGI President Ikeda encourages us to “expound the Mystic Law to people whether they be wise or ignorant, whether they believe or disbelieve.” Propagation is an act of mercy, not a contrived exercise.

— YVONNE D. THOMAS, Oakland, Calif.

At their crucial moment, I offer to share how *I* surmount obstacles. I keep it brief and *never* claim it’s the *only* route to happiness; just that it works for me. I offer as much as they welcome, then chant for their happiness. I try not to be pushy.

— KIRSTEN CUTTS, Portland, Ore.

Usually when I’m interacting with a person, I sense that this person needs Buddhism in his or her life. Then I explain to the best of my ability.

— MYKE BAILEY, Jersey City, N.J.

Many of the people I know have grown distrustful that any religious or spiritual practice can help them. Consequently, they have a helpless feeling when facing problems that seem “too big” for them to handle. In these situations, I try to tell them that there was a time in my life when I felt the same way. But, I tell them, through my Buddhist practice I have discovered that I can take control of my problems rather than feeling that I can do nothing that counts.

— DENNIS McPHERSON, Independence, Mo.

When I’m optimistic and am really enjoying my practice, telling others about Buddhism is very natural to me. When I establish friendships and share parts of my life with others, I always indicate that I practice Buddhism. Sometimes this leads to inquiries and sometimes not, but at least I shared this part of myself.

— JUAN A. ALVAREZ, Paris, France

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