

PERSPECTIVE: Our Lives as Faith Itself
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Faith is deep self-awareness. Faith is unshakable conviction. Faith is rich character. Faith is a strong sense of responsibility.
(April 11 *World Tribune*, p. 13)

7:18 a.m.: Riding the A train to work. Running on time.

Reminiscing over my incredible discussion last night with Denise and Deb over coffee at Starbucks Cafe. We talked about a lot of exciting stuff. Our topic of discussion was how we can “live our lives as one complete SGI activity.”

“Wow,” I said. It is amazing to think that I can live my life as one fulfilled SGI activity. No more separating my responsibilities as a young men’s division chapter leader, doing two consecutive Gajokai shifts a month, being a filmmaker/writer, and desiring to find the right woman for my life. “Yes, they are all one activity, all right!” I must have forgotten that our practice is a continuous journey of self-improvement, breaking through our limitations and embracing people.

For example, here I am writing in my journal, riding the A train express to work and looking around the subway car. First, I see passengers who are tired, sipping from coffee cups and reading newspapers. Some people look worried, as others look quite happy. It is amazing how the sad faces outnumber the happy faces. I think it’s time to do ma’ thing.... I think I’m gonna smile!

Smile. I should smile more often. It feels good to smile. I hope my smile will encourage a passenger to have a wonderful day. Nam-myoho-renge-kyo. Cool. I am really enjoying this.

Last night, as we were discussing this point of our life as one activity, Deb and Denise had a lot to share.

Deb said: “I try to offer a child a piece of candy. I do my best to be patient with my boss, even when he is being unreasonable. Every day, I chant to fulfill my desires through daimoku. Also, I am sincerely praying that my family, friends and co-workers will soon practice this Buddhism.”

We all agreed that every activity begins with word, thought and deed. “Our activities are fueled through the pulse of the human heart,” Deb concluded.

Denise shared that daimoku is in all aspects of her life. She also said that “Buddhism is not a light switch that we conveniently turn on and off. If we continually say, ‘Daisaku Ikeda is our mentor,’ then we need to confidently show actual proof of the mentor’s teaching.”

Well, I have to say honestly that living the mentor’s teaching is not easy. Recently, I have had amazing moments interacting with people, confronting my self-slander and learning from my mistakes.

SGI President Ikeda has said: “By challenging an enormous goal head-on, youth can break through their limitations and realize tremendous growth” (April 18 *World Tribune*, p. 10). Putting his guidance into practice, I have been fighting my negativity through studying, writing, shooting my short film and having dialogue. Funny how the dialogues and unconsciously making silly mistakes allow me to repair crucial flaws within my character. In the moment of any drama, I quickly pull away and take a deep breath.

For example, at a district discussion meeting a few months ago, I sort of forgot President Ikeda’s lesson about having compassion for the members. I was so excited after the

meeting that I approached T— with “mad” energy, asking him to participate in our next youth division activity. In short, he brushed me aside, disgusted by my approach.

Quite honestly, T— had every right to brush me off, because I did not ask even simple questions like: “Hey, man, what’s going on?” “How are you doing?” “When can we get together?”

I felt that I failed T—, President Ikeda and myself. ‘Cause how can I expect to keep good friends in faith if I cannot acknowledge their well being? I must try harder as a friend and leader. That is why I must joyfully digest my mentor’s teaching to not allow “the Daishonin’s words to wither” and wholeheartedly have compassion for people.

No matter what, I must win and overcome my shortcomings. Although I am not perfect, I want to help eradicate misery from the planet. Today and onward, I am determined to develop wisdom through faith, practice and study.

By the end of 1997, I will successfully accomplish all of my personal and organization targets, so I can collectively secure the foundation of kosen-rufu in New York City. I guess this is a short example of how I will try to “live my life as one SGI activity.”

Oh, shoot...my stop is coming up. OK, it’s 14th Street and 8th Avenue. Now I am ready for work.

Peace, ya’ll.

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