

EDITORIAL: Your Own Mind Business

There's nothing more unreliable than one's own mind, SGI President Ikeda has been emphasizing lately. Unreliable in the sense that our minds sometimes play tricks on us, making us think we're right when we're wrong, making us think we want what's really bad for us, etc.

While Buddhism teaches us to depend on ourselves, an important part of this self-reliance is our self-education, the training of our tricky minds. As Nichiren Daishonin stresses, "One should become the master of his mind rather than let his mind master him" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 146).

But in Buddhism, mastering one's mind isn't just training a wild beast — it also means to open our minds, to keep changing our ways of thinking for the better. Albert Einstein said that the splitting of the atom changed everything in our world except for the way people think, and thus humanity is drifting toward catastrophe. Positive new ways of thinking are thus essential to our survival as a species and as individuals.

Dr. David Krieger, founder of the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation, suggested five new ways of thinking at the 4th U.S.–Japan Youth Peace General Meeting, Aug. 17:

1. We can "think indigenous." By this Dr. Krieger meant we can remind ourselves that we coexist with this earth. "Think like a person whose feet touch the land," he said, "like one who loves and respects the earth and all its creatures." We can become environmentally educated, he added, always questioning the reparations of our actions on the environment.

2. We can "think like an astronaut." In other words, we can try to see the world as one. "Borders may exist on maps," Dr. Krieger said, "but they do not really exist on earth. That is what astronauts discovered when they went into space and looked back at our small fragile planet that floats in an immensely vast universe."

3. We can "think with our hearts." Dr. Krieger meant by this that when we try to understand others, to stand in their shoes, we can develop a compassionate way of thinking. He also pointed out that we shouldn't be hindered by enemies we may have. "Look into the faces, the eyes, the hearts of those who are labeled enemies," Dr. Krieger urged. "Find their humanity. In doing so, you will also find your own."

4. We can "think peace." Dr. Krieger's definition of peace was "a dynamic process of nonviolent social interaction that results in security for all members of society." In other words, peace takes ceaseless efforts — a lot of brain-wracking is required. Peace is thus much more than the absence of war, he said. It's something that has to be worked on constantly.

5. We can "think like a seed." "Recognize that you have the inherent power of growth," Dr. Krieger said. "You are not static. A tiny seed may become a majestic tree." President Ikeda has made the same point many times — that as "seeds," we should try to develop ourselves in the here and now.

Potential is realized in many ways, Dr. Krieger said, even in the seemingly small decisions we make each day. He gave the example of Rosa Parks, who in refusing to give up her seat realized her potential. And Daniel Ellsberg, the Defense Department analyst who reached his potential by risking imprisonment to turn over the Pentagon Papers to the *New York Times*, thus exposing secret reports on the Vietnam War to the American people.

Actually, these five points are not really new ways of thinking — they have been around for centuries. But Dr. Krieger's point was that for people to change how they think would

indeed be something new and would change the world as we know it.

To avert the human disaster that Einstein alludes to, we desperately need to implement many “new” ways of thinking. Without such a great effort on our part, we’ll just keep thinking the same way we always have and recycling the same old bad ideas. So, let’s put on our thinking caps and add to Dr. Krieger’s list.

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