

Voices

Ginny Waters, Kansas City, Mo.

As the women's division meeting approached, I grew excited about making causes and refreshing my faith. The meeting was successful, yet that same afternoon, I faced one of my biggest challenges — a family reunion with my father, whom we had not seen in years. Secretly, I wanted to be alone. What should have been a joyful event turned into a badly planned, chaotic scene. The lower worlds reared their ugly heads! I found myself full of complaint.

Oh, no — was I an armchair Buddhist who only gave lip service to guidance? I hoped not. I had to set the example. I remembered reading guidance about how holding grudges only makes us suffer and, if we are going to move our lives forward, it is more enjoyable if we do so with pride and confidence. How could I turn theory into practice — by chanting for wisdom or by trying to “fix” my environment (i.e., my family)? I had to raise my life-condition first.

I told my father that we needed to look for the positive and praise and empathize with each family member. My changed attitude made me a better person to be around, too — less judgmental. Before my father left the family get-together, he commented on my efforts to improve myself.

Kathleen Ross, Columbia, Mo.

Taking full responsibility for our happiness and for all people's happiness implies the ability to respond. This means taking action in life, realizing our profound mission in thought, word and deed — our wonderful, creative adventure as Bodhisattvas of the Earth. We leap forth joyfully, prepared to fulfill the Buddha's intention to make all people equal to himself. Buddhism is about living a joyful existence as a human being every day. Our mission is to realize this joy in living while enabling everyone around us to establish a joyful life-condition, too.

Closing the gap means grasping the enormous potential of a common mortal to live powerfully, without fear, to contribute to others no matter what our circumstances, to transform our difficulties into value, to never give up and to feel faith coursing through our lives. Whenever we face the Gohonzon and chant like an arrow aimed at a target, we close the gap. Whenever we make one more effort to communicate with someone who causes us trouble, whenever we share SGI President Ikeda's guidance with one suffering person, whenever we teach another person how to chant, we are closing the gap between our deluded lesser selves and the vast life-condition of Buddhahood that is our birthright.

Yumi Shadley, Kansas City, Mo.

We have been taught that if we practice Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism correctly, we can overcome obstacles and accomplish any dream. As members, we have experienced this phenomenon and this is why we continue to practice. From my experience, I know that my actions affect myself, others and the movement for world peace. For me, the time for action and to take responsibility for my life and others is now. Moving from theory into action means taking responsibility for our own happiness, the happiness of other people, supporting members' dreams, nurturing youth and strengthening our families. The motto “I will do it” means that I will be the one to make it happen.

Today, for me to actualize the motto “I will do it” means that I will make every effort to

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ensure that the women's division is the first to fight on the side of the SGI-USA by following the teachings of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism.

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