

WOW! A Good Loser?
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Recently I was channel-surfing when I caught an interview with George Steinbrenner, owner of the New York Yankees. Mr. Steinbrenner was asked about the growing competitiveness in baseball and other sports. As part of his response, he said, "Show me a good loser, and I'll show you a loser."

For some reason, that really hit me. I ended my channel-surfing for the day, but for the rest of the day and the days that followed, I continued to think about what the Yankees owner had said.

For the past several years, I have been challenging a couple of major goals that have yet to materialize. I keep setting new target dates, but still they haven't happened. Hearing the comment about being a "good loser" started me thinking about how I respond each time a target date comes and goes. Perhaps I have been too much of a good loser: What happens is that I usually just accept that I didn't make it yet and determine to keep setting new target dates until I do. That in itself is not a losing attitude. But, at the same time, it's not enough to just keep setting new target dates without determining to try harder the next time.

Nichiren Daishonin encourages us to "strengthen your faith more than ever. Should you slacken even a bit, demons will take advantage" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 242). It's becoming clearer to me that we can't be "polite" about not reaching our goals. It's not necessarily productive to become angry and go around kicking and screaming, either.

What I think is absolutely necessary is to increasingly strengthen our resolve and try even harder until our goals are met. Otherwise, demons will definitely seize the opportunity to plant and nurture seeds of doubt about the Gohonzon and our Buddhist practice that may prevent us from ever realizing our dreams.

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