

**PERSPECTIVE: HOW TO BE AN EVERYDAY BUDDHA**  
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In order to be an everyday Buddha, it's not important to be able to maintain a lotus position for long periods of time. Nor do you have to shave your hair off and wear strange clothing. But it is important to recognize that each and every one of us is a Buddha, depending on our life-condition — a simple statement that you've probably heard before. How many of us actually believe it?

In the movie *The Empire Strikes Back*, the character Luke Skywalker meets Yoda, a wise Jedi. Yoda teaches him that a Jedi's strength flows from a power within known as "the Force." Luke watches in amazement as Yoda demonstrates the power of the Force to retrieve Luke's spaceship from the bottom of a muddy swamp. There it sits, wet and dripping with gooey things, but the spaceship is out of the muck and Luke says, "I don't believe it!"

Yoda responds, "That is why you fail."

The difference between success and failure in being an everyday Buddha rests on whether or not you believe you are a Buddha.

Of course, when I hear things like this I've said, "That's easy for you to say, but I don't see it in myself." OK, so let's talk about something you do see in yourself — the Ten Worlds and mutual possession. We all know what the Ten Worlds are. Everyone experiences Hell, Hunger, Animality, Anger, Tranquillity, Rapture, Learning, Bodhisattva. And when it happens, we're certain of it, we can feel it. There is no question of whether we believe in those nine worlds or not because we are experiencing them.

When we chant Nam-myoho-renge-kyo—every time we chant — we are experiencing Buddhahood.

The tenth world is Buddha, and I am (and so are you) the Buddha as well.

Let's look at what the word *Buddha* means. In Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism, a Buddha is an awakened human being with all their strengths and flaws. This means that an ordinary person — warts and all — can perceive the truth. A Buddha is not a god or supernatural being who can perform magic, or some incredibly calm being who rises up above the everyday world, blissfully unaware and unconcerned with reality. A real Buddha is right down here in the trenches with everybody else, but they make the best decisions to create value for themselves and for everyone around them.

Secondly, we all have that "diamond life-condition" that we've heard about. It's inside everyone's life, equally large. When you practice this Buddhism, you are constantly uncovering more of it. Even Nichiren Daishonin had to awaken to his Buddhahood. At first he referred to himself as "a votary of the Lotus Sutra," until he realized that he was the Buddha. At that point he was enlightened. The same goes for us.

We aren't practicing to become a Buddha. We already are. We are practicing this Buddhism to uncover our own Buddha nature.

And then there is the age-old question of "What about karma?" Well, we may prove that we are Buddhas through our karma. How can we do that? Our karma, or some of the previous causes we have made that have created our present circumstances, are the very tools that will help us achieve our enlightenment. What a concept! Awakened to our Buddha nature, we take every experience in life and make a positive breakthrough without creating other negatives. With this Buddhahood, this diamond life-condition, we can be either

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self-defeating or victorious.

In his letters, the Daishonin said, “One who perceives the truth is a Buddha, one who doesn’t is a common mortal.”

Merely thinking is mortal. Feeling and knowing with our whole lives is Buddha!

Seeing the beauty of my existence is Buddhahood. Believing that we are the Buddha will allow our inner beauty to flow, then we can achieve unbelievable things.

As Yoda would say: “My ally is the Force. Life creates it, makes it grow. Its energy surrounds us and binds us. Luminous beings are we. You must feel the Force between you and me, the tree, the rock — everywhere.”

We must honor our lives. When we truly honor our lives, everything will honor us and there is no greater honor than proclaiming Buddhahood. And may the Force be with you.

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