

**THE KEY TO MY DETERMINATION
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SGI President Ikeda's desire "for the members of the women's division... to become the happiest people in the world" permeated the atmosphere when I arrived at Soka University of America, Calabasas to attend the women's training meeting 10 years ago on Feb. 27, 1990.

President Ikeda began by answering the question: "What is the purpose of life? It is happiness." He went on to explain relative and absolute happiness and that "The purpose of Buddhism is to attain Buddhahood... a state of happiness that can never be destroyed or defeated." Yes, I thought, this is what I deeply desire. Why had I continued to allow my circumstances or my own limitations and weaknesses to make me feel less than the worst person in the world at times?

I listened more intently as the profundity of his guidance pierced my heart: "True happiness lies only in establishing such a supreme state of life. By so doing, you are able to change all sufferings into causes for joy and contentment and to live with composure and jubilation." All right, I thought to myself. I know this Buddhist practice works. But how can I achieve and maintain this state of life when obviously because of my husband's lack of wisdom, foresight or insight our family suffers?

President Ikeda continued: "The people around us reflect our state of life. Our personal preferences, for example, are mirrored in their attitudes. This is especially clear from the viewpoint of Buddhism, which elucidates the workings of cause and effect as if in a spotless mirror."

So what was I to do to change and put my life back on the correct path of faith? He added: "When you chant to the Gohonzon, you are able to perceive the true entity of your life and tap the inexhaustible life force of Buddhahood. [Therefore] just as you look into a mirror when you make up your face... you need a mirror that reflects the depths of your life. This mirror is none other than the Gohonzon of... observing one's life."

A strong determination grew in my heart as I listened to President Ikeda explain that "chanting Nam-myoho-rence-kyo is what polishes our life. Not only do we undertake this practice ourselves, we also endeavor to teach others about the Mystic Law so that the mirror of their lives shines brightly, too. Thus, it can be said that we are masters of the art of polishing the mirror of life." This became the key to my determination until today—to take total responsibility for everything that occurs in my life—to change my life by deepening my faith and doing my human revolution.

I wanted to build a happy, healthy and wealthy family to show actual proof of the power of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism. I determined that every word I spoke, every thought I had and every action I performed would lead others toward this practice and kosen-rufu. I felt so much hope because everything—I mean everything—was totally up to me and my willingness to chant to see the true aspect of my life and to continually polish my character, my soul and my heart with the bright light of Buddhahood.

Today, I am happy to say that my heart is full of appreciation for every struggle and suffering that I have endured over the last 10 years. I have tried my best to always reflect on the causes I make every moment of each day. As a result, the challenges have transformed into benefits to help me live up to my determination to polish my Buddha nature. I am so happy. Not because I have the big house or lots of money, but because I

have genuine hope and confidence that I do and will continue to create my future by always reflecting in the mirror of my faith.

I am so grateful to President Ikeda for giving the women's division this guidance and for being an example of how to continue practicing this Buddhism and winning in daily life. I hope that all women will strive to perceive the Buddha nature inherent in their lives in order to establish true undeniable, unswayable happiness. Together let's all ring in the Century of Women with the power of joy in our hearts.