

**BACK TO THE BASICS
DEALING WITH ANGER
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“Don’t get mad—get even!” This might be typical advice from dysfunctional soap opera characters, but it’s not Buddhism. Lose the “get even,” and you are making some progress. Lose the anger, and you are really getting it!

Anger is one of the three poisons, so we try to minimize, not feed it! Consider, for instance, Nichiren Daishonin’s advice to Shijo Kingo, one of his most dedicated (and sometimes angriest) disciples: The Daishonin tells him that the gods will not protect a short-tempered person, that it is vital to master his emotions, that he should be considerate of those who believe in the Lotus Sutra, no matter what they may have done in the past.

As we practice this Buddhism and try to better our organization, we have to remember to model the behavior we wish to see from others. Getting mad at leaders, fellow members or the SGI itself is counterproductive.

How best to avoid this trap? We can try practicing as the Daishonin did—that is, not getting mad even at the fools and bozos who seem to want to mess up our lives. We can try also to cultivate the habit of forbearance. The “Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings” says: “Forbearance means the Land of Eternally Tranquil Light. This mind of forbearance is called Shakyamuni Buddha” (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 771).

Lastly, before we proceed to blast someone for errors real or imagined, we can reflect on these quotes: “If anyone sees a person who accepts and upholds this sutra and tries to expose the faults or evils of that person, whether what he speaks is true or not, he will in his present existence be afflicted with...severe and malignant illnesses” (*The Lotus Sutra*, p. 324). “Believers in the Lotus Sutra should absolutely be the last to abuse one another. All those who keep faith in the Lotus Sutra are most certainly Buddhas, and one who slanders a Buddha commits a grave offense” (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 756).

Next week: Ted Morino on righteous anger.