

**EDITORIAL**  
**DON'T WAIT: NOW IS THE TIME TO WIN**  
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**The first three Soka Gakkai presidents, along with countless pioneer members, created the beautiful movement we have today by always taking action, ignoring those who said, ‘The time isn’t yet right,’ or ‘Don’t rock the boat.’**

The future is an infinite succession of present moments.” On May 4 at Soka University of America’s Aliso Viejo campus, Dean Lawrence Carter of the Martin Luther King Jr. International Chapel at Morehouse College shared this bit of wisdom.

This reasoning is completely in harmony with the SGI’s movement. The first three Soka Gakkai presidents, along with countless pioneer members, created the beautiful movement we have today by always taking action, ignoring those who said, “The time isn’t yet right,” or “Don’t rock the boat.”

“It’s all about taking action, taking that first step,” says SGI President Ikeda. “If your aim is to swim across a vast ocean, it will do you no good to get cold feet before you even take the plunge. Rather, you’ve got to make a move, keeping your sights on your distant goal” (*Faith Into Action*, p. 89).

There are so many ways we can stop ourselves from taking initiative. We may be overwhelmed at the enormity of a particular goal or dream, thinking, “I need to have this all figured out before I jump in.” Or we might worry about the people around us, wondering, “Will they freak out if I do this?”

Of course, solid planning and an understanding of where those around us are at are vital. But if such things prevent us from taking that first step, from opening a new opportunity, then they are just another obstacle to our growth. If we wait for others to let us know it is all right to act, we may never develop the kind of indestructible courage and happiness that Buddhism allows us to realize.

During his historic visit to America in 1990, President Ikeda said: “I always place a high emphasis on personal initiative. Spontaneity underlies the spirit of autonomy and independence; conversely, taking action because one is told to amounts to slavery of the spirit” (*Faith Into Action*, p. 88).

SGI-USA members were excited to welcome President Ikeda to the Grand Youth Culture Festival in 1999. Mustering all their strength behind the idea of his impending visit, the youth threw themselves into creating an unforgettable event and inspiring a new generation of leaders for peace. They displayed tremendous initiative.

As you know, President Ikeda was unable to attend the festival. But that took nothing away from those that completely transformed their lives through their Herculean efforts. Not waiting for anyone or anything, with their mentor’s spirit in their hearts, they accomplished something that many thought they could not. They proved themselves to be true successors through taking action with everything they had, without hesitation.

If our action is based first on our faith and our sincere prayer in front of the Gohonzon, we will not fail. The ride may get bumpy, but prayer allows us to build the confidence that, despite our present circumstances and self-doubt, our efforts will result in complete victory.

“Prayer becomes manifest in action, and action has to be backed up by prayer,” President Ikeda reminds us. “Only then can we elicit a response from the Buddhist gods and all Buddhas. Those who pray and take action for kosen-rufu are the Buddha’s emissaries. They cannot fail to realize lives in which all desires are fulfilled” (*Learning From the Goshō*, p. 93).

Whatever our goals this year or this century — getting out of debt, establishing a career, sharing Buddhism, reconciling with family members, creating a culture festival — let’s not “get cold feet” before we have even begun. As impossible as it may seem now, we are closer to victory after we have taken that first step.