

EXPERIENCE—PATRICIA COLOMBO-BEYELER, LOS ANGELES OVERCOMING OBSTACLES WITH WAVES OF DAIMOKU

Facing a dire situation at work, Patricia Colombo-Beyeler uses prayer to break through the ceiling of obstacles.

For the last six years, I worked for a company that specialized in the training and placement of people who were laid off or unemployed. As a business development executive, one of my most satisfying accomplishments was to design a program that helped integrate welfare recipients and war veterans into society. My job was going well, and I really felt I was making a difference in people's lives.

In February, I had a closed-door meeting with the CEO of the company. She broke down and started crying. She told me the company was in terrible debt and needed immediate capital to keep going and avoid layoffs. I was devastated by the news. The only thing I could do was to ask her to chant Nam-myoho-renge-kyo. Even though my boss knew I was a Buddhist, she was a devout Muslim and had no idea where I was coming from.

I later invited her to our Beverly Hills District Women's Division General Meeting. It was exactly what she needed. Afterward, she told me that the warmth and the openness of the members' experiences gave her hope and confidence to win over her circumstances.

I loved my job and wanted my company to survive, so I went for guidance. And the guidance I received was strict. I was encouraged to win with daimoku and told that daimoku was the only way I would break through the ceiling of obstacles.

Based on this advice, I began a three-hour a day daimoku campaign. Every day, I woke up at 3:00 a.m., so I could complete my goal in the morning. I knew that I had to radically adjust my lifestyle to keep this up because, in addition to my job, I had recently gotten married, had a beautiful 5-month old baby boy and an 11-year old daughter. My life was definitely full.

At times, it was tough waking up before the crack of dawn, but I could definitely see the results. Every phone call I made at work connected me to the right person. My co-workers fed off my energy and began to feel confident we could overcome this situation. My boss observed that the office began to function just like it had before my maternity leave.

Each day was crucial, and things were not always rosy. Our staff went from 65 to 15 employees. Within a two-month period, different employees were laid off every other day. I kept chanting furious daimoku. Unbelievably, within a one-and-a-half-week period, I was able to raise \$169,000 for the company. This allowed us to make payroll, pay off some immediate bills and relieve some of the pressure in the office.

We decided that the company needed to change direction in order to survive. Instead of training people, we decided to lease out our training space to other companies. A university expressed interest in leasing out the space for adult classes for the next three years. This contract with the university stabilized our company's financial condition.

Two months into my campaign, I continued chanting three hours a day. It was also at this point that I had a realization. Even though I was glad I could help our company survive, I was not happy doing sales work. And as sad as it felt to consider it, I knew I had to move on. I wanted to make more of an impact on people's lives.

While closing out contracts with organizations that funded our programs, I spoke with

a woman who mentioned she had a position opening up in three weeks. The woman, an attorney, said I would work as her protégé and assist her as a vendor contract analyst. In addition to analyzing contracts, I would monitor vendor training for people who were laid off or unemployed. And some of the contracts were with welfare recipients and veterans.

This new job would also pay my way through law school and enable me to achieve my nearly forgotten dream of becoming an attorney. Unfortunately, I still had to go through a process of passing tests and numerous interviews—a process that usually takes three to four months to complete.

I took a deep breath and began to chant even more. I remembered the quote from Nichiren Daishonin that says: “The journey from Kamakura to Kyoto takes twelve days. If you travel for eleven but stop with only one day remaining, how can you admire the moon over the capital?” (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 1027). During this period, some of the members of my district were kind enough to come to my home to chant and do gongyo with me.

After chanting so much daimoku, my life-condition was really joyful. Very naturally, I started introducing many people to this practice.

After continuing my campaign and going through further testing for the new position, on June 25, I was chosen for the position at the exact salary I had asked for in my interview. And all this happened in only two months, instead of the three to four months it was supposed to take.

My prayer to be victorious has enabled me to change so much in my life. I feel stronger and more joyful, and I can now pursue my dream of becoming an attorney to make a difference in people’s lives. I’ve also been able to keep in touch with my old boss, helping her any way that I can.

I am so thankful to the members who supported me and to my family for their undying support and love. I feel as though I have not only broken through the ceiling of obstacles, I have begun to see the wealth of fortune this practice has allowed me to create.

I am forever grateful, forever determined to win.