

Remembering We Are In Charge of Our Lives
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Your mastery of the Buddhist teachings will not relieve you of mortal sufferings in the least unless you perceive the nature of your own life. If you seek enlightenment outside yourself, any discipline or good deed will be meaningless. (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 4)

I love this Gosho passage because it describes one of the most important features of Buddhism — simply that we have control of our lives and that it is a waste of time to look outside ourselves for solutions to our problems.

I have been practicing for quite some time and know in my mind that this practice works, but it takes constant effort for me to realize it with my heart. I mean, every time I had a problem or even a major obstacle, I used to do everything else but go to the Gohonzon.

I enjoy going to activities, meeting the members and talking with them. And I like to study. However, when forced to challenge myself to overcome something it has been a tremendous undertaking every time.

Why? It is always easier for me to use words than to take action. So, I fool myself by blaming the environment, other people, etc., for my obstacle — or just suffer through it.

However, taking responsibility within the organization and realizing that I'm not getting any younger, I have learned to really self-reflect and not seek happiness outside myself, as this Gosho passage says. It is not enough anymore to just study and internalize intellectually; I have to apply my study in my daily life and take action.

I'm not even close to where I want to be, but I am much happier now because I feel a sense of direction and purpose. I no longer feel helpless or sorry for myself when something arises. And I am beginning to understand that no one else is responsible for my life except for me. I have nobody else to blame except myself if I don't apply myself.

So, my New Year's resolution is to face my challenges head on, based upon strong prayer, and to realize everything stems from me.

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