

‘How Precious Life Is!’
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**If you live even one day longer, you can accumulate that much more good fortune.
How precious life is! (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 231)**

When I was younger, my growth and development within the organization came first in the Fife and Drum Corps. Though I never liked going to practice, I enjoyed spending time with my friends there. We learned gongyo, studied at every practice and thus developed our understanding about Nichiren Daishonin’s Buddhism. But it was difficult to distinguish among us, myself included, what level of faith we were at. At that time, it didn’t matter to us.

It wasn’t until something happened to my friend that I re-evaluated my faith. Her mother became very ill, to the point where the doctors thought she would not live much longer. It was a serious time for all of us. Though her mother broke through and lived (and is still alive today), my friend slowly started to doubt the Gohonzon. “Why is something like this happening to my mother, who has been a strong member for many years?” she was thinking.

Though my girlfriend still likes the organization, she does not practice consistently anymore or come to any activities. I felt that her mother survived because of faith; that she can still be a strong member is her good fortune. I believe she eradicated some deep karma. It is just as Nichiren Daishonin’s letter states: “If you live even one day longer, you can accumulate that much more good fortune. How precious life is!” In this letter, he is explaining to one of his followers who is ill the principle of changing one’s karma.

Recently, my mother was in an accident. She came out of it fine, but it shook me up. I realized that she could have died or been severely injured; her accident made me appreciate our practice even more. We tend to feel appreciation when something like this happens, but not in our daily lives, like appreciating having good health, wonderful friends, a nice job, etc. — the things we take for granted.

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