

Yours Truly, Betty B.

DEAR BETTY: My leader told me to be specific about my desires so for the past three months I have been chanting for a boyfriend six feet tall, with dark curly hair and blue eyes, nice pecs, nonsmoking, fond of walks in the country yet enjoys a competitive game of tennis. I was feeling very confident until I realized — Duh! — I forgot to chant about his film preferences. What if he turns out to be an Aliens 3 type? Yikes! Have I blown it?

— HOLLY WOOD

DEAR HOLLY: No, but have you ever thought of ghost-writing ads for the Personals? Without a doubt, focusing on specific goals can help you make the right causes to achieve them: Looking for a bachelor's degree? Go to college. Want to buy a house? Save up for a down payment.

But if you want to take a ride on the love boat, you may have to navigate deeper waters. So often we tend to go for the superficial. But the more complex our desires, the more difficult to pinpoint what's best for our lives. SGI-USA Study Department Chief Ted Morino once remarked: "Prayer should come from the heart. The Gohonzon knows your worries and desires. Focus on the Gohonzon and simply chant."

So don't play mind games in front of your altar. And don't sweat the specifics — you'll never think of all of them (What if he vacations in the mountains and you like the shore? What if he watches football all weekend long?). Working it out is part of the — *ahem* — fun.

Trust that your life is moving in a positive direction. Like Nichiren Daishonin says, faith alone is what really matters (practice and study come in handy, too). And if the guy with the pecs isn't right for you, don't worry. Just send him to me!

DEAR BETTY: I really like to chant, but sometimes I feel I can't spend another minute practicing in the organization.

— STANDING ALONE

DEAR NO MANISANISLAND: Hey, brother, I can share that space. With all these years of practice, Betty has had *abundant* opportunity to be peeved with practically everyone she has ever done gongyo with. There's just something mystic — the polite term — about working together toward our noble cause that brings out the good, the bad and the totally unspeakable.

And that's actually a benefit. How else would perfect beings like you and me learn to deal with others' little quirks?

And there may come a time when these members will be just the ones to rush to your aid. Allow me to share my grisly little tale. It all began with a trip to the Florida Nature and Culture Center. How Betty hungered to attend the training session there! How she longed to catch some rays by the pool, luxuriate in the hot tub, smack her lips over the gourmet food. (Oh, and to attend the seminars too.)

And then...the night before the flight...Betty contracted a vicious stomach flu! Should she go? Should she cancel? Well, that flu couldn't last forever...

Wrong! Thus unfolded an epic drama in which Betty battled gamely against a mighty opponent bent on bringing her down amid the fluttering palms. On top of everything, Betty had to try to be a good sport! To keep a high life-condition! To — *gasp!* — actually follow her own advice!

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Through it all, the members were wonderful, offering warm wishes, stomach remedies (including a strange concoction supposedly given to UNICEF babies, poor things) and souvenirs from the sightseeing tours. Their unfailing kindness showed the true value of our organization. It almost made up for missing out on all that fabulous food. But not quite.

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