

**Dedicating My Life To Helping People Practice**  
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Most people consider me to be a “fortune baby,” since my family began practicing when I was very young. My mother was introduced to Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism when I was about 6 years old.

She was going through a divorce with my father and was seeking something to give her courage to face her future. She was about to enter the work force for the first time in her life, as well as raise four children alone.

During our childhood, my siblings and I were filled with distrust, resentment and hostility. My mother remarried when I was still very young; my siblings and I were supposed to accept this person into our lives. This brought even more resentment into our household, and we wasted no time in creating a hellish life for my mother.

I began to chant on my own when I was 13. I wanted to be part of the Fife and Drum Corps and was told I had to learn gongyo and chant to be in it, so I did. This was the best thing that could have happened to me.

Gradually my siblings began practicing on their own. As our practice strengthened, our relationships with one another, as well as with our mother, stepfather and father, began to blossom. We began to develop trust and support instead of anger and hostility. Today even though each of us has separate lives with families of our own, we continue to support each other in our practice and daily lives, through both good times and bad.

I began to assume responsibility in the organization when I was still a high school student. Through this opportunity, I learned more about this practice and developed strong bonds in the organization at a young age.

The first time I found myself facing a huge challenge was when I was getting ready to go to college. I was faced with the possibility of not being accepted to Colorado State University and not being able to afford it even if I were. I had to put my practice to the test and did. I was accepted into the university, into the program I wanted, and received all the financial support I needed.

This was actual proof for me of my efforts as a leader in the organization. After that experience I vowed to dedicate my life to helping people practice and see tremendous benefits in their lives.

During my college years I was involved in a relationship that I thought was the one for me. I spent two years in the relationship with my life revolving around him. Most of my free time was spent with him so I found myself neglecting my responsibilities as a member and leader in the organization. I thought that this was my happiness, that he was all I needed.

Little did I know that soon this relationship would turn for the worst. I was left devastated, totally discouraged. But my young women's division leader encouraged me to look beyond this and once again dedicate my life to supporting other young women's division members. So I did.

I determined that I would develop and strengthen my life and that when the time was right I would meet the person with whom I would spend the rest of my life. Today I am happily married to a member who totally supports my efforts as a young women's division leader.

This practice has given me the courage to face any difficulty in my life and win. As SGI President Ikeda often says, Buddhism is concerned with winning.

**WT**

Title: Dedicating My Life To Helping People  
Subject: World Tribune 05/02/97 n.3137 p.11 WT970502p11  
Author: Jenny Slaughter  
Keywords: Dedicating Experiences Helping Life Marriage Pages People Relationships Youth