

Yours Truly, Betty B.

DEAR BETTY: I barely have time to fire up the remote before my wife is after me to do gongyo or, worse yet, “talk.” Much as I love her, I’m beat after work — it’s not like I’m lounging around the house with two preschoolers all day.

— WORKINGMAN

DEAR COUCH POTATO: Where have you been, back in the ’50s?

When it comes to preschoolers, there’s very little “lounging,” as your charming wife has no doubt said — and said and said. After a day with Lamb Chop and Kermit (delightful as their companionship is to the younger set), it’s a wonder she can speak in complete sentences. On the other hand, it’s not easy bringing home the bacon (close your ears, Miss Piggy).

Granted, it’s tough doing gongyo after fighting rush-hour traffic — and perhaps the boss — but it can energize you and put the day’s struggles into perspective. That doesn’t mean your wife should greet you at the door with beads and a sutra book.

Find the time that works best: after dinner, perhaps, or following the bath-time-read-me-a-story routine (you know, the bonding thing — as many of your enlightened buddies already know).

As for “talking” — what, *Cat in the Hat* got your tongue? In *The Creative Family*, SGI President Ikeda remarks:

The kind of home I fervently hope for is a place for warm interaction between people....

To talk with someone else about those things that move him or her most, or things that are pleasurable or bitter, and to talk honestly, from the heart, will produce an inexhaustible round of subjects.

A marriage is a relationship in process, not a relic in a wax museum. It’s amazing how quickly two people in love can grow apart without mental and, well, other kinds of stimulation. Better a discussion on current events than a future one on current affairs. It takes effort to keep those wedding bells ringing, but even your best friends will tell you, it sure beats nights home alone with a remote.

DEAR BETTY: Whenever I miss morning gongyo, I feel so guilty. Like my leaders say, I’ll never change my karma that way. But sometimes I get to bed so late, when the alarm goes off I can’t move. And then I’m mad at myself all day.

— SNOOZE CONTROL

DEAR ALARMED: Why don’t you flog yourself with a whip while you’re at it? General Director Zaitzu recently suggested we look at things this way:

Since doing gongyo is a privilege (not a duty), if we are forced to skip it, it’s as if we missed out on something we really enjoy. For instance, you may like playing racquetball. If something comes up and you miss your regularly scheduled match, you don’t feel guilty about it — you look forward even more to going next time.

Don’t creep around like some wretched sinner in a Renaissance fresco. A positive practice based on self-respect will move you closer to your goals — even if you don’t win the Cal Ripken award for consecutive gongyos.

That doesn’t mean you should party your life away (unless you invite me, naturally) instead of making efforts in faith. But the road to happiness is long. And the point is to enjoy every stage of the journey.

Title: Yours Truly, Betty B.

Subject: World Tribune 05/09/97 n.3138 p.6 WT970509p06

Author:

Keywords: Betty Bodhisattva Family Gongyo Guidance Practice Relationships Tribune Truly World Yours