

Reaching Out and Interacting With People

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It is important to push ourselves to advance on the forefront. It all comes down to self-motivation, conviction and the spirit to stand alone. Those who do activities only because they are told to do so, or out of a sense of obligation, will not experience true joy. Since we're alive we ought to live with freshness and vigor. If we are going to run, then we should run with all our might. (*Learning From the Gosho*, p. 197)

Recently I attended a world peace gongyo meeting in my neighborhood and was moved by a young woman's experience. She explained how, through her efforts to develop a self-motivated practice, she became self-absorbed. I, too, had made the same mistake growing up in this organization. Though I recognized our organizational activities as valuable, I felt my time was better spent developing myself through self-motivated study.

As a result of this effort to become self-motivated, my career began to take off. But I started to feel something was missing from the formula — I wasn't contributing to the happiness of others. I was self-motivated, but also self-absorbed. Having recognized this shortcoming, I challenged myself to overcome it. I attended my district meetings with the attitude of "What can I contribute?" rather than "What can I gain?"

In the above passage, SGI President Ikeda says, "It is important that we push ourselves to advance on the forefront." I have realized that the "forefront" is our districts. I feel it is our greatest challenge to aggressively "push ourselves" to contribute to our district meetings. We should strive to be active participants, not just spectators.

In the Super Bowl, spectators in the crowd cannot determine the victory or defeat of the team. It is only the players in the game who can. In becoming active participants in our District Super Bowls, we should approach our meetings with the same attitude the NFL players do — the attitude to give it our all, pull on our past experiences and actualize a great result based on our serious preparation. In other words, it is important for us to achieve victories.

To become a great victor in our district discussion meeting, we need to be courageous enough to reach out and express our heart to others. Only then will they open their hearts to us. Our measurement of this victory can be determined by the meeting's atmosphere. It should be one where everyone truly enjoys themselves, engages in discussion and leaves with a new sense of hope and determination to be victorious in their lives.

I have realized that true victory in my life is found in exerting myself for the sake of others. Am I saying to neglect your career development and daily life? No, I'm saying that the key to becoming victorious in your life is to reach out and interact with people who are not necessarily like you. The district gives you this kind of opportunity.

As YMD members, let's live with and infuse our districts with "freshness and vigor." Let's "run with all our might" toward the 21st century. United as comrades, let's create an unprecedented history for humanity, while experiencing many personal victories along the way.

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