

**VOICES: Independence Day is coming soon.
What does freedom mean to you?**

Members from Palm Beach (Fla.) Territory respond:

When I think of freedom, I think of choice. By using this practice you have the opportunity to choose how circumstances affect your life. For example, when President Toda was imprisoned, they didn't take away his freedom; they took away his liberty. These are two entirely different things. He didn't have the liberty to leave the prison, but he had the freedom to think and feel as he wished. I think this practice is so great because it gives people freedom to feel and be their true selves in any situation.

— DOMINIQUE FLORES, Boca Raton, Fla.

When I think of freedom, I think of responsibility. In this practice we chant to take responsibility for our lives. In this act we are liberating ourselves from restrictions. We gain the freedom to let go of anger and the barriers we've placed in our hearts that prevent us from being happy. Yes, we have freedom of speech and for the most part freedom of action, but you cannot have true freedom without consideration of others. This includes taking responsibility for our environment.

— LINDA TEALLOW, West Palm Beach, Fla.

When I think of Independence Day I feel a tremendous debt of gratitude to those who gave their lives for freedom. Due to their courageous action, we can practice Buddhism freely in our country. The advantages of freedom may sometimes be loosely defined as the ability to do anything you want, when you want. I believe with freedom comes the responsibility to create the most value one can, to cherish life, to blossom and manifest your highest life-condition. In short, freedom is the ability to evolve into a humane individual.

— MILES LAVENTHAL, Lantana, Fla.

To me freedom means removing suffering. With freedom comes responsibility because you cannot run from suffering if you want to change it into happiness. You must take responsibility for your life. Then you can learn how to be free and enjoy your life. From this practice, I've learned how to overcome my suffering and be truly free. Freedom of speech and doing what you want is the surface. True freedom is having a free spirit and creating value.

— BOBBIE COURRIER, West Palm Beach, Fla.

It's hard to imagine not having freedom since I have never lived in a country that prohibits freedom. On another level, we can create our own prison within our minds. I believe it's my practice that gives me a deeper sense of freedom. Whatever situation you're in, whether or not you are free is really based on your perception of reality. Our practice removes the barriers we have put on ourselves, and it provides us with the freedom to make choices. Freedom is the realization that we have unlimited potential.

— TOM TURBYNE, Boca Raton, Fla.

When I think of Independence Day and freedom, I believe that people really stood up for what they believed in. And from my practice, I'm learning how to do that. I'm able to free myself from restrictions and feel what is deep and meaningful in my life. Also, to me,

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freedom is being able to work towards world peace. Getting rid of the restrictions has helped me to change my life. This is the process of true freedom.

— PAULA LAMBERTSON, Pompano Beach, Fla.

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