

## Yours Truly, Betty B.

*DEAR BETTY: On vacation the weather was gorgeous, the kids were delightful, and the food was terrific. Now I'm home and the kids are whining, the place is a wreck, and I can't think of what to make for dinner. Why can't life be like a vacation?*

— FADING TAN

DEAR HOPE YOU USED SUNSCREEN: I hate to be a wet beach blanket, but those idyllic days are not reality. Let's face it, beautiful surroundings, lavish meals and constant entertainment aren't tough to take. They don't require you to chant a whole lot. But the less-than-fabulous environment of daily life — that's another matter.

The challenge is to develop the kind of life-condition where meatloaf tastes like filet mignon and your window box resembles Monet's garden at Giverny. Of course it's perfectly OK to work toward buying steak every night (cholesterol aside) and to save toward your own estate in the south of France. In the meantime, learn how to enjoy what you've got. President Toda once said that he was in the state where he enjoyed living itself. Can you say the same?

Granted, it's easy for me to give advice as I dictate this column from the pink sands of Bermuda (just kidding), but since the majority of our lives is consumed by day-to-day minutiae — work, kids, shopping, dishwashing — what makes more sense: to relegate happiness to a two- or three-week segment of the year or to pump ourselves up with enough daimoku, home visits and study to enjoy every moment? You decide. And don't forget to send me a postcard.

*DEAR BETTY: I got on the scale when I returned from vacation and discovered I had put on 10 pounds! I'm trying to diet but so far no luck. Strangely enough, it's hard for me to force myself to do gongyo and chant Nam-myoho-enge-kyo, too.*

— LAZY DAYS OF SUMMER

DEAR LAZY (Well, you said it first): They say you can't be in two places at once, but we sure keep trying. Could be you're still in the vacation mode — minus the beach or the mountains or whatever.

Though I sympathize with your struggle to lose those 10 pounds (this summer Betty B. herself stayed at — where else? — a B&B that served the most scrumptious biscuits and muffins every morning — definitely a broadening experience), your diet is a personal choice.

But if you want to change your karma, there's only one recipe: gongyo and daimoku. Accomplishing anything in life — doing gongyo, losing weight, saving money, gardening — requires self-discipline. It's not always easy to muster up the motivation. But let me tell you a little secret. It's hard for all of us to do gongyo and chant every day. Yes, even for your leaders, those paragons of...OK, they're only human, but they're out there making efforts. And that's what all of us need to do to change our lives, whether it's replacing that morning lemon poppy seed muffin with sit-ups to get in shape for our fall wardrobes or setting our alarm a half hour earlier to get in some extra daimoku for our back-to-school — or work — goals.

SGI President Ikeda said recently: "Life is a struggle with ourselves. It is a tug-of-war between moving forward and regressing, between happiness and unhappiness. Those short on willpower or self-motivation should chant daimoku and pray with conviction to become

Title: Yours Truly, Betty B.

Subject: World Tribune 08/22/97 n.3153 p.5 WT970822p05

Author:

Keywords: Betty Bodhisattva Daily Guidance Life News Tribune Truly World Yours

people of strong will, who can tackle any problem with real seriousness and determination.”

If you can't do it on your own, find a pal and encourage each other. The end of summer is upon us. Time to find our way back to the “earth” of our Buddha nature. You may have made *Contact* with some beautiful sights out there, but as all earthlings know, there's no place like home.

**WT**

Title: Yours Truly, Betty B.

Subject: World Tribune 08/22/97 n.3153 p.5 WT970822p05

Author:

Keywords: Betty Bodhisattva Daily Guidance Life News Tribune Truly World Yours