

**Facing Fears**  
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**Now more than ever, you must neither show nor feel any fear.... You must grit your teeth and never slacken in your faith. (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 140)**

I attended a meeting recently where a young woman spoke about participating in the September SGI World Youth Training Course in Japan. She shared some guidance she heard and her personal experience, both of which were very encouraging.

But the part that I found most moving was the way her hands shook as she spoke.

Although her voice was clear and confident, her face smiling and radiant, her body standing straight, she was terrified to be speaking in front of everyone at the meeting. But her shaking hands were the only evidence of this. I admired her for challenging a great obstacle within herself — her shyness — and speaking in public even though it was difficult for her.

I often see people who make everything they do look easy: speaking, being prepared for any situation. Although I am striving to develop that capacity in my life, I am not there yet. How do I get there? I think it is by challenging myself to face my fears as Nichiren Daishonin says here.

Because of our faith and practice within the SGI organization, we have many opportunities to take on new challenges that allow us to grow. I am convinced that it was this young woman's deep faith and compassion to want to share her experience that enabled her to overcome her fears about speaking.

Nichiren Daishonin wrote frequently of the importance of standing up to our fears and using our practice to do this. As I watched this young woman speaking, I thought of this. Despite her fear, she did not cut her experience short. As her hands shook, she simply held on tighter to her notes.

In her own way, she was gritting her teeth and not slackening in her faith.

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