

**Feeling Overwhelmed?**  
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**The true path of life lies in the affairs of this world. (“The Gift of Rice,” *The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 268)**

Over the last three months, I have felt at the mercy of my surroundings. I have felt completely overwhelmed by everything. Work, activities, relationships, exercise (or lack of), finances, traffic and about anything else that I have come in contact with. It was so bad that even on the morning of my recent birthday, I was racked with anxiety.

I found myself questioning my actions, second-guessing my judgment and doubting my practice. Nothing that I had tried to accomplish seemed to be happening, nothing that I had chanted to resolve had been resolved.

The above passage is part of a letter responding to a believer who provided Nichiren Daishonin with various gifts. Items that the Daishonin needed for his survival. It is a simple letter, but one that touches on something important: The path to happiness lies in the affairs of this world; in other words, in daily life.

To have a victory in life, one must win in the midst of one’s environment and despite one’s weaknesses. And for me, that’s where the real battle begins.

There is no one in history who has accomplished something great without going through tremendous personal struggles. There is no one who has made a change in the world without having to wage an all-consuming battle. You can’t win if you don’t fight.

The Daishonin was continually conspired against, his living conditions were often extreme, and those who supported him were often harassed. Yet he continued to encourage others and to speak out, even at the risk of his life.

My struggles, though they pale in comparison to those of the Daishonin, are the struggles that I need to go through now to win. No matter how overwhelming they may seem, no matter how much I want to run away and hide, if I want to win, I have to face what’s in front of me. That I can’t deny.

**WT**