

WOW! Everything A Benefit?
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About a year ago, a close friend and I chanted several hours together: two artists, chanting to access wisdom for more work in our respective fields. Not uncommon. And she wanted a boyfriend, too. (Note: She received the Gohonzon six months prior; I in 1984.)

Here's what happened: Within 24 hours, she got two phone calls. One from an employer who just happened upon her resumé (submitted three months prior) and one from an old boyfriend interested in "rekindling."

I went home to a phone machine loaded with messages from friends in my area — all in various stages of freaking out.

A consistent message I hear from a trusted senior is "You must ask yourself, where's the benefit?" Before I asked myself this ill-fated question, I whined to myself, "Why does she get the boyfriend and the job, and all I get is another opportunity to accumulate treasures of the heart?"

I caught myself as I said it. Another senior has encouraged me to have appreciation, to know that I am getting what I need. As SGI President Ikeda writes in *Lectures on the "Expedient Means" and "Life Span" Chapters of the Lotus Sutra*: "What does the wisdom of the true entity of all phenomena add to our lives? It gives us the power to skillfully use everything to create value.... Fundamentally, for people with faith in the Gohonzon, everything that happens is a benefit."

I used to think that only the receiver benefited from altruism. Now I realize that interactions with others are mutually encouraging. Giving is just as valuable as receiving.

Now I'll respond differently if, at a crucial moment when I'm freaking out and needing encouragement, someone calls seeking encouragement — mirroring exactly what I'm going through. I'll think, "Wow, what a benefit!"