

Trusting My Own Heart
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While deluded, one is called a common mortal, but once enlightened, he is called a Buddha. (“On Attaining Buddhahood,” *The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, pp. 4-5)

In June of this year, I attended the Study/Public Relations/Publications Conference at the Florida Nature and Culture Center. I had heard members talk about their experiences at the FNCC— how they left feeling renewed and excited about challenging their problems to become happy, or how they had overcome an impasse in their practice.

In fact, in the back of my mind, I was expecting my own revelation when I went!

I participated in the meetings, made new friends, learned new things and had a great time. Yet, I couldn't help but feel that somehow my experience at FNCC wasn't as earth-shattering or significant as those of other attendees.

My last morning there, I took a breather from all the activities and watched the sun rise over Toda Lake. As I reflected on all the expectations that I'd had of the conference, I realized that I had not been honest about how I truly felt.

The truth was that I had been afraid that my experiences and feelings weren't important. I realized, however, that *my* memories, *my* experiences, were as real and as important as anyone else's. I didn't have to lessen them.

I remembered what Nelson Mandela said in his 1994 inaugural address: “It is our light, not our darkness, that most frightens us. We ask ourselves, who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented and fabulous? Actually, who are you not to be?”

Through my practice of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism, I can challenge the deluded thinking that causes me to suffer and begin to trust my own heart!

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