

**REDETERMINING TO WIN  
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Recently I received an e-mail from a college friend of mine who told me that he might not be able to graduate on time because of poor grades. Reading about his struggles took me back to the late spring of 1998 when I was in a similar position, when laziness and fear of taking responsibility for my life resulted in my not having enough credits to graduate from college on time. I would be able to walk at graduation with my classmates, but would not receive a diploma until I finished my last two classes in summer school.

I remember how devastated, bitter and frustrated I felt. I thought, "After all those years of using my Buddhist practice to challenge and overcome depression, poor grades, and anxiety over paying for college (among many other struggles), is this how it's supposed to end?!" Most of all, I really didn't even want to go to my graduation.

I decided that I would have to chant like I'd never chanted before and throw myself even more wholeheartedly into my SGI activities. I happened to pick up SGI President Ikeda's lecture on the Gosho "Happiness in This World," and was very encouraged by his words:

"Everything comes down to our state of life. It is within our power to take our lives in any direction we wish."

In time these sentences helped me develop a new perspective and determination. Diploma or no diploma, this was going to be the only graduation I would be going through, so I had to enjoy it.

The principle of *ichinen sanzen* (3,000 realms in a single entity of life) as revealed in the Lotus Sutra describes the changing nature of each moment of life. At any given moment, we have the potential to experience any one of 3,000 life-conditions. A Buddha understands this principle with his/her entire being, and as such understands that the next moment can be his/her greatest moment. On a practical level, we can understand this principle as showing us the power of redetermination at the crucial moment. President Ikeda is a great example of this principle in action — he is the master of redetermination!

My graduation was a total victory. I got the most cheers when my name was called, and my family came together in a way I had never seen. It is a golden memory. And none of it would have occurred if I hadn't redetermined to win at the crucial moment.