

## **You are Never a Victim of Your Circumstances**

Many people believe that they are the victim of one circumstance or another. Our culture teaches us that that is the case. We see it demonstrated over and over by public figures.

When we think we are a victim we have turned over our power to something outside of ourselves. There are hidden advantages to doing this. It means we can abrogate responsibility for our own lives, we can just blame it on destiny, "I'm not supposed to..." on someone else, "It's his/her fault" or "He made me do it.", on the environment, "I can't because of difficult circumstances like the economy." We can complain and get sympathy from other people.

But there are also hidden disadvantages. We continue to stay in a situation where we are actively suffering. We feel helpless, powerless. It's depressing. A hidden downside "If you practice faith yet have an attitude of complaint, you will destroy your good fortune in direct proportion." FIA 11

What does Buddhism say about this? Nichiren Daishonin says, "Environment is like the shadow and life, the body. Without the body, no shadow can exist, and without life, no environment. In the same way life is shaped by its environment." WND, 644

How does this apply in everyday life?

This means that we are not born into one static environment into which everyone else is born as well. Rather we live in an individualized environment, uniquely customized and tailored to each of us according to the state of our inner lives. This includes the causes and conditions into which we were born and extends to all the circumstances of our lives.

Let me give you an example. One woman lived two houses down from an attractive middle-class family home. The grandfather died and his grandson inherited the house. For a while everything continued as it did before, but then the grandson became involved with the meth world. Over a three-year period that attractive home morphed into a weedy, unkempt, garbage-strewn environment that repelled every onlooker. As the grandson's state of mind changed, so did his environment.

Each of us at the core of our lives, through our Buddha nature, is one with the creative power of the universe. Through that connection, we manifest all the circumstances of our lives in the objective world, through the law of simultaneity of cause and effect. It says that when we think, speak and act, we are setting a cause for our future which will manifest when the time is right. If we set a negative cause, we will manifest a negative effect. If we set a positive cause, we will receive a positive effect. This means that our current life circumstances are the result of causes we have made in the past. We are never victims of something outside of ourselves.

We are absolutely responsible for all the circumstances of our lives.

That fact gives us great power. It means that if we are dissatisfied with something in our life, we have the power to change it through our faith. We can also consciously make causes through our speech and action that will improve our future. Using our connection with that creative

power through chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, we can take charge of our lives, manifesting what we want on purpose, rather than inadvertently manifesting what we don't want. When we challenge our circumstances and strengthen and improve our inner self, our outer circumstances will come to reflect the change.

## **Experience**

Tracy was married to a man who wanted to run his own business. He left a secure position in her father's business to start his own company. Unfortunately, he was not successful and the business had to be closed. This was the beginning of a ten-year cycle where he would try to start a business and it would fail. Needless to say, this was devastating for their finances and for him.

She was working but didn't make enough in her line of work to support the whole family. They were about \$1000.00 short every month. As they had three children, two salaries were needed to support the family. She kept trying to change him but he continued with this pattern.

One day she decided to take her life into her own hands, since she couldn't influence him to do anything differently. She told him that he either had to get a job or she was going to divorce him. She gave him three months. He made no effort to find work, so she left him. From that moment on her whole life stabilized. She and the children lived in somewhat reduced circumstances and the children, who were teenagers by then, all got jobs and learned how to provide some things for themselves.

During that ten years she felt victimized by her circumstances and helpless to change them. As long as she kept waiting for something outside of herself to change, her circumstances remained the same. When she took her own life into her own hands her environment improved. Oneness of self and the environment.

## **What To Do If You Feel Victimized**

If you're feeling victimized by your circumstances, use the practice to challenge your situation. Set a goal, what you want your situation to be like when you achieve it and then chant for that every day for 90 days.

Don't focus on the problem, only the solution. If you find doubts or negative thoughts coming up, don't indulge them. This means both during your chanting time and throughout the day. When you become aware of them, refocus your attention on what you want, how your goal will look when you achieve it. Pay attention to ideas that come to you about steps to take and then take those steps. Chanting plus action is the road to success.

If you need to make yourself accountable to someone so you will follow through, report back to your group meeting or to an accountability partner.

## **Summary:**

Today we looked at the Buddhist concept of oneness of self and environment. We discussed that our current life circumstances are the result of past causes we have made through the simultaneity of cause and effect. We are never the victim of something outside of ourselves.

Then we went through the steps of how to challenge the circumstances we don't like to create what we want in our life.

1. Set a goal, what you want your circumstances to look like when you achieve it.
2. When negative thoughts or doubts arise, don't indulge them
3. Refocus your attention on what you want.
4. Pay attention to ideas that come regarding your goal.
5. Take the steps that come to you.
6. Make yourself accountable.

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