1. REFRAIN from eating meals, as an SGI Zoom meeting constitutes a faith activity.

2. TURN CAMERA ON DURING ACTIVITIES which involve discussion and engagement.

3. MUTE WHEN NOT SPEAKING.

4. OTHER DISTRACTIVE BEHAVIORS: COOKING/CLEANING
Creating Value

SGI-USA November 2021 Discussion Meeting
Key Points

1. The word *Soka* means “creating value” or “value creation,” based on Tsunesaburo Makiguchi’s idea that value is found in “beauty, benefit and good.”

2. In Buddhism, to create value means to relieve suffering and bring happiness to ourselves and those around us.
“What’s the aim of your educational theory?” [asked Josei Toda.]

“In a word, to create value,” [answered Tsunesaburo Makiguchi.] ...

His cheeks flushed with excitement, Mr. Toda said: “Sensei, what if we take the first Chinese character of each of the words sozo (creation) and kachi (value) to make the word Soka, and call it ‘Value-Creating Education’ (Soka kyoikugaku)?”

“Yes, that’s a good name!”

- Ikeda Sensei, The Wisdom for Creating Happiness and Peace, part 3, pp. 207–08
Creating Value Means Adding Benefit and Goodness to People’s Lives

The fundamental criterion for value, in Mr. Makiguchi’s view, is whether something adds to or detracts from, advances or hinders, the human condition. ...

In his theory of value, Mr. Makiguchi states that the existence of religion is justified by the degree to which it relieves suffering and brings happiness to individuals (the value of [benefit]) and to societies (the value of goodness). In his unalloyed humanism, he asserted that people do not exist to serve religion; religion exists to serve people.

- Ikeda Sensei, A New Way Forward, pp. 75–81
We Can Create Value From Any Situation

Even what may seem at first sight to be an intensely negative situation—a difficult relationship, financial woes or poor health—can serve as an opportunity for the creation of positive value. A lifelong commitment to justice, for example, may arise from an early experience of having been wronged.

- https://www.sokaglobal.org/resources/study-materials/buddhist-concepts/creating-value.html
Brief Experience on Creating Value
Members of the SGI Embody the Spirit of Creating Value

We pray for the happiness of each person, encouraging them and taking action to help them, even while dealing with our own hardships or storms of destiny. That is why the Soka Gakkai has been able to build a beautiful, vibrant and harmonious realm of Buddhist humanism that could be described as a miracle—a realm imbued with the compassionate spirit of the Buddha.

- Ikeda Sensei, August 2021 *Living Buddhism*, p. 60
Discussion Questions

1. What does creating value look like for you?
2. Can you share an experience when you were able to create great value from something negative?
November 2021 DM Presentation Notes

Topic: “Creating Value”

*This material can also be found in the October 15, 2021 World Tribune insert.*

Slide 1: (not in 10/15/21 WT)

**This slide is NOT part of the discussion meeting presentation. This slide is to outline basic Zoom etiquette. This slide can be shown at the beginning of a discussion meeting as members/guests join the meeting. The presentation starts from slide 2.

Slide 2: (10/15/21 WT: Creating Value [title slide])

• Hello and thank you for this opportunity to study with you all today!
• Today’s topic is creating value. Let’s get started!

Slide 3: (10/15/21: Key Points)

• So, let’s begin by going over our key points for today.
• They are:
  1. The word soka means “creating value” or “value creation,” based on Tsunesaburo Makiguchi’s idea that value is found in “beauty, benefit and good.”
  2. In Buddhism, to create value means to relieve suffering and bring happiness to ourselves and those around us.

Slide 4: (10/15/21 WT: Soka Means ‘Value Creation’)

• We celebrate November 18 as Soka Gakkai Founding Day.
• On November 18, 1930, founding Soka Gakkai President Tsunesaburo Makiguchi’s work The System for Value-Creating Education was published.
• As an educator, Mr. Makiguchi believed that true education is focused on helping each student learn how to lead happy, contributive lives.
• During this time, the Japanese government taught that, as loyal subjects of the emperor, students should serve the interests of the state, including its war efforts.
• Mr. Makiguchi spent his career seeking a way to revolutionize Japan’s education system.
When he was introduced to Nichiren Buddhism, he found a philosophy of life that helped him further develop his view toward education.

One evening, Mr. Makiguchi was talking with his disciple Josei Toda about publishing his educational theory and what to name the book. They had the following exchange:

“What’s the aim of your educational theory?” [asked Mr. Toda.]
“In a word, to create value,” [answered Mr. Makiguchi.] ...

His cheeks flushed with excitement, Mr. Toda said: “Sensei, what if we take the first Chinese character of each of the words sozo (creation) and kachi (value) to make the word Soka, and call it ‘Value-Creating Education’ (Soka kyoikugaku)?”
“Yes, that’s a good name!”

Here, in this discussion, we see mentor and disciple discussing the best way to describe this idea of creating value. Mr. Toda worked tirelessly to make his mentor’s dream a reality. This has become the noble tradition of the Soka Gakkai.

Slide 5: (10/15/21 WT: Creating Value Means Adding Benefit and Goodness to People’s Lives)

So what exactly does “creating value” mean?
The word “value” points to the worth of something, like the value of a house or the value of a rare trading card.
In SGI Nichiren Buddhism, we believe that life itself holds the greatest value.
Ikeda Sensei explains this further: “The fundamental criterion for value, in Mr. Makiguchi’s view, is whether something adds to or detracts from, advances or hinders, the human condition. ... In his theory of value, Mr. Makiguchi states that the existence of religion is justified by the degree to which it relieves suffering and brings happiness to individuals (the value of benefit) and to societies (the value of goodness). In his unalloyed humanism, he asserted that people do not exist to serve religion; religion exists to serve people.”
For each one of us, “value creation” may not look exactly the same on a day-to-day basis.
Thankfully, the three founding Soka Gakkai presidents have created a blueprint of how we can apply Buddhism to our lives each day to bring forth the greatest value, benefit and goodness in ourselves and those around us.
Here’s a vital takeaway from today’s study: No matter what situation we are in, we can always create value.

Even if we are facing tough times, we can make the most out of anything we face. In fact, Buddhism teaches that facing obstacles help us dig deeper within ourselves and prove the power of our lives that much more.

Sensei says: “Even what may seem at first sight to be an intensely negative situation—a difficult relationship, financial woes or poor health—can serve as an opportunity for the creation of positive value. A lifelong commitment to justice, for example, may arise from an early experience of having been wronged.”

This idea of creating good out of something bad is commonly accepted by many.

For example, many of us have heard the phrase, “When life gives you lemons, make lemonade.” This idea of making something sweet from something sour is similar to the idea of creating value in any situation.

In the 14th century, millions of deaths resulting from the bubonic plague, causing people across many countries to change the ways they lived and socialized. Among them was Isaac Newton. He, too, had to "work from home" for over a year, during which he formulated his the laws of motion and gravity.

Likewise, the SGI movement emerged amid the chaos of postwar Japan, when many were seeking a sense of hope and something to guide them out of their suffering.

No matter what we are going through, positive or negative, we always have the potential to create greater value in our lives and the lives of others.

To conclude, today we are celebrating the 91st anniversary of the Soka Gakkai’s founding And the members of this wonderful organization are prime examples of this principle of “creating value.”

Sensei says: “We pray for the happiness of each person, encouraging them and taking action to help them, even while dealing with our own hardships or storms of destiny. That is why the Soka Gakkai has been able to build a beautiful, vibrant and harmonious realm of Buddhist humanism that could be described as a miracle—a realm imbued with the compassionate spirit of the Buddha.”
• As we celebrate our founding day, let’s refresh our resolve to create value wherever we are and help uplift humanity, one person at a time.

Slide 9: (10/15/21 WT: Discussion Questions)

• Thank you all for listening!
• Now, it’s time for the best part: discussion groups!
• We can use these questions as a starting point, they are:
  1. What does creating value look like for you?
  2. Can you share an experience when you were able to create great value from something negative?