

No Complaints!
By DAVID EISENBERG
SGI-USA Soka Group Chief

A ship or plane can move forward due to the force of resistance. In a similar way, faith in the Buddhism of Nichiren Daishonin is almost always accompanied by difficulties. But you must never forget that you can develop your life-condition greatly when you meet hardships. — SGI President Ikeda, *Buddhism in Action*, vol. 1, p. 140

I seem to have a very hard time remembering and applying the above quote from President Ikeda to my life. What he is saying to me is that not only must I welcome challenges as an opportunity to grow and strengthen my faith, but I must understand that they are my benefit.

Lately, I have been realizing that it is my nature to complain a lot. Not always outwardly but in my mind or heart. I find myself thinking that because I spend many hours doing activities and trying to support the members, I should not have to endure struggles, or that they should be easily resolved. But whether I voice these feelings or just think them, they are still complaints and ultimately prevent me from truly growing in my state of life.

In the late '80s and early '90s, when I was constantly doing Soka Group activities, I deeply grasped the meaning of supporting behind the scenes. No matter how long I had to stand outside in the rain, no matter how long the activities lasted, not only would I not complain, but I would cheerfully greet the members and do my absolute best to make them feel protected and at ease.

I was challenging my weaknesses and winning over them. Every moment spent supporting the members' efforts for kosen-rufu translated into great benefit for myself and my family. Activities such as Soka Group, Gajokai and Byakuren offer great fortune for the youth division and a great opportunity for youth to develop their compassion and strength of character.

But as I moved on to other responsibilities within the organization, I feel that I began to forget the lessons I had learned and to fall back on my wimpy ways. It's a wonderful thing to share our struggles with one another, and we should always feel that we can be honest about how we feel. But there is a difference between that kind of heart-to-heart dialogue and petty complaining. A whining attitude does nothing to encourage or motivate others.

As a Soka Group leader, I had always prided myself on my mental and physical toughness. I could do the longest shift; I could go without food or a break; I could stand alone at the farthest point from the activity center. And I would enjoy it! And I wouldn't complain! So how do I now rekindle that kind of life-condition?

For me, it is a battle of constantly reminding myself that my benefit, my growth as a person, is dependent on the challenges in life. What a boring existence I would lead were there no problems. My prayer must be to become a stronger person, one who is not afraid of the big battles, one who has such a powerful life force that the obstacles are afraid of me!

As I move forward into 1998, I am more determined than ever to be a great example of selfless hard work for the sake of others. And I will challenge myself every day to do my best with no regrets. My motto — "NO COMPLAINTS!!!"

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