

**GET REAL!**  
**Y'ALL SHOW ME THE WAY**  
**BY SHAN SERAFIN, SGI-USA JR. HIGH SCHOOL LEADER**

Right now graduation is in the air. The feeling evokes a sense of awe in me, an awe of the power of relationships. Recently, I got a letter from a former student of mine, a young girl I used to teach in high school. Way back at the end of one school year I was signing yearbooks—hers was one of them—and in writing to her I used SGI President Ikeda's wisdom and wrote something praising her heart. Whatever I wrote apparently stuck with her. Her recent letter to me—a thank you note—described how these words stayed with her to this day.

In *The Way of Youth*, President Ikeda states, “In Japanese, we write the word for ‘human being’ with the characters meaning ‘person’ and ‘between,’ expressing the idea that human beings are complete only in relationship to other people” (p. 33).

The young woman's letter had an interesting effect on me. I began to think of all the times, the many, many times, something that someone has done has stuck with me. In the spirit of the graduation season, I'd like to mention a few of these people, who, probably having no idea that they did, inspired me to become a better man simply through an action (an incomplete list, not in any order, not representative).

To my buddy Tom, a firefighter, saving lives and saving me from chaos once, driving 400 miles just to pick me up, turn around and drive us 400 miles back. To Steve, Big Daddy Jr., who, bottom line, cares for his members. To the woman at the park whose name I'll never know, who years back when I was a whirling pre-pubescent offered me a heartfelt conversation when I thought I couldn't talk to anyone. To the top student at my high school, whose weekly progress was my weekly inspiration. To my current circle of co-leaders, whom I think of whenever I'm too tired to act. To Danny, who is like a walking, talking fountain of youth. To Brian, who chants with me in the morning and shows me a seeking spirit in action. To Jomo, who shows me that education is daily life, who learns everyday from everybody. To Sibyl, who fights harder than most anyone I know. To Cory, who practices what he preaches, so to speak, giving a young fella golden opportunities. To Chuck and Masao who showed me how to be strict with myself when it comes to the world's most precious commodity, young folk. To Gandhi, whose life was his message. To President Ikeda, whose major accomplishments move me and live with me, but whose basic gestures on the memorable occasions I've met him, serve as my song to sing when I'm truly challenged. To my heroes, my father, who is a champion of optimism, and my mother. Mom, I owe my faith to you.

Every day, the people in my life offer concrete examples of how to be a good human. Maybe I can somewhat repay you by striving to be one.