

**WOW! Owning a Big Heart**  
**By ANTHONY D. DAVIS**  
**Chicago**

If I am having tremendous difficulties and not showing signs of overcoming them, then how can I confidently share the Mystic Law with others or be effective as an SGI leader? Am I showing “real” actual proof in my life, or am I just giving lip service to the great wonder and power of Nichiren Daishonin’s Buddhism?

I have spent a lot of time asking myself these questions. Sometimes I have even thought that I probably shouldn’t be a leader for fear of being a hypocrite and actually discouraging the members I am trying to encourage. I mean, I have to be OK before I can really help anybody else, right??

A few words spoken by SGI President Ikeda here in the United States in 1993 profoundly changed my views, as I was struggling with a barrage of serious health, financial and other problems — while challenging my leadership responsibilities. He said: “Those who make efforts to bring joy to others even though they may be suffering themselves are bodhisattvas.... Such is the kind of big-hearted person I hope you will become.... This is the purpose of Buddhist practice. When we climb the mountain of this practice, we accumulate solid good fortune in our lives without fail.”

Reading this sent a blast of clarity to the core of my recurring confusion. I recalled how second Soka Gakkai president Josei Toda encouraged members suffering with poverty, while he battled severe financial problems of his own — how President Ikeda encouraged members suffering with illness, while his own body was racked with fever, weakness and nausea.

At the center of this effort to bring joy to others though personally suffering is a big heart. Getting a big heart is the purpose of Buddhist practice. I now definitely know that I can own a big heart, too!