

**PERSPECTIVE
DEVELOPING AN ATTITUDE OF TRUST
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Being flexible and having an open heart are keys to success.

A major city-wide construction project currently underway in Boston is affectionately referred to as The Big Dig. It will create a larger tunnel underneath Boston Harbor and generally free up what is currently a very congested traffic problem. The Big Dig has garnered increasing amounts of attention because it is way over its already gigantic budget and is missing its completion date by years, all while it makes traffic more congested than before the project started.

Recently the project director for the Big Dig was fired. He had been labeled as talented yet tyrannical, dedicated yet domineering and principled yet inflexible as a manager. Reports indicated that he was a real iron-fisted, confrontational boss with large doses of arrogance and self-importance. He was what psychologist Douglas Murray McGregor described as a Theory X manager.

In 1957, McGregor explained his idea of Theory X and Theory Y type managers. Theory X types think their employees are stupid, lazy and unmotivated, and must be given orders to get them to move. They place heavy demands on their staff while browbeating and intimidating them into submission. Confrontation is their lifestyle.

Theory Y Managers are the opposite of this. In McGregor's model, Theory Y Managers are optimistic and have big hopes for their employees. They serve as guides to enable their employees to work responsibly and creatively, and they favor friendship as the foundation of their relationship with their staff. They freely dispense encouragement, inviting discussion and consultation while building an atmosphere of cooperation.

As the SGI-USA grows and human relationships become more complex, I think it becomes increasingly important to develop an attitude of friendship and trust among one another. The way we go about our business has far-reaching implications in an increasingly sensitive time. I think people today want and need to be empowered. And when it comes to our own and others' shortcomings, patience and understanding — as well as taking the time to recognize and appreciate other people's strengths — will go a long way in making our organization attractive and appealing. Toward this end, I think that being flexible and having an open heart are keys to success.

A few years ago, I had the opportunity to encourage a member to return to the SGI after practicing with the temple. I remember trying to figure out what I was going to say as I drove to her house. I felt I had to get my "rap" down pat before I met her. After I arrived, we did gongyo together and then engaged in some small talk. Just as I was about to launch into my prepared "rap," I was suddenly overcome with emotion. In that moment, I realized in a profound way how much I really cared about and admired this person. From that moment, I abandoned all strategies and spoke from my heart. I pleaded with her to return to the SGI-USA at the cost of my own dignity. I even got on my hands and knees to ask this person to come back. The earnestness of my words and actions became the starting point for some really productive, heart-to-heart dialogue. Tears flowed and we broke through something that produced a deeper trust between us. Within a few short weeks, she

decided to begin practicing together with the SGI.

This whole experience has been the inspiration for what I consider to be significant human revolution. The process of welcoming this dear friend back to the SGI has allowed me to clearly reflect on my own attitude and initiate some important changes within myself.

I am also inspired to unite with General Director Danny Nagashima and work to achieve the four goals he described in his New Year's message. That is: to create an organization filled with teamwork and great heart; to treasure our own families and all people; to protect our precious SGI members and not let anyone be deceived by Nichiren Shoshu priests while showing temple members the beauty of the SGI; and to self-reflect and ponder what is the best way to realize President Ikeda's vision for individual happiness and American kosen-rufu.

This year I am determined to take a giant step with all my fellow men's division members as we continue to build bonds of trust and friendship!

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