

**BACK TO THE BASICS
COMPASSION FOR OTHERS
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How many of us just relish the opportunity to admonish a fellow member—or, even better, a *leader*—for his or her authoritarian nature, shabby attitude or otherwise poor example?

After all, doesn’t SGI President Ikeda tell us to say what needs to be said?

Ah, righteous indignation. Without the Bad Housekeeping Certificate of Exclusive Moral Virtue and Correctness, the Crusades, Inquisition and Cultural Revolution could have never happened. As Buddhists, we should be the last to succumb to the tendency to project evil onto others—and then proceed to blast them with a clear conscience for just cause.

We all seek to protect and perpetuate the wonderful teachings of Nichiren Daishonin, but what is the most effective way to accomplish this?

First and foremost, we must *live* them ourselves, as we demonstrate through our good example the lessons of the Daishonin’s writings and compassionate traditions of the SGI. Seeking to bring out the best in us, in others and in the organization is, I submit, the Buddha’s behavior for the 21st century.

And while the Daishonin tells us to reproach, oust or to punish those who slander the Law, he also tells us that when a person’s slanders are minor, he or she may be able to correct those faults without being confronted. If we find it absolutely necessary to reprove a person for acting against Buddhism, we should also take responsibility for leading him or her to obtain benefits.

In other words, in Buddhism we admonish others with compassion, not anger! In “The Hero of the World,” a letter to Shijo Kingo—a stalwart defender of the Law if there ever were one—the Daishonin thus writes, “Even should the people on your side make a slight error, pretend not to see or hear it” (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 839).