

GROUP LEADERS' SUCCESS SEMINAR

**EMPOWER EACH MEMBER: CREATE A
COLLABORATIVE GROUP**

SERIES 4

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EMPOWER EACH MEMBER: CREATE A COLLABORATIVE GROUP

THE THEME OF EMPOWERING PEOPLE IS THE ESSENCE OF NICHIREN DAISHONIN'S BUDDHISM. WE CONTINUE TO REFER BACK TO THE GOSHO FOR GUIDANCE AND DIRECTION. THIS IS SO IMPORTANT BECAUSE THE GOSHO IS THE SOURCE OF OUR HAPPINESS, INSPIRATION AND EMPOWERMENT. THESE ARE THE INGREDIENTS NEEDED TO FULFILL OUR MISSIONS FOR KOSEN-RUFU.

PRESIDENT IKEDA'S DAILY GUIDANCE FOR MARCH 25 EMBODIES THIS ESSENCE OF PERSONAL EMPOWERMENT AND COLLABORATIVE EFFORT.

We are no longer in an age when one person can shoulder everything. Of course, for the day-to-day running of the organization someone will still be officially designated as president, but ultimately our future development hinges on every member having the commitment required of a Soka Gakkai president. With this spirit, this sense of responsibility, this leadership in your activities, may you always work for kosen-rufu and for the victory of the people. May you also build a Soka Gakkai where everyone can advance joyfully, a Soka Gakkai of undying progress.

Daisaku Ikeda, For Today and Tomorrow, 3/25

If you light a lamp for another, your own way will be lit.

Nichiren Daishonin, *Gosho Zenshu*

HERE ARE A FEW QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER REGARDING THE THEME,
"EMPOWER EACH MEMBER, CREATE A COLLABORATIVE GROUP."

1. The dictionary definition of empowerment is: to give power or authority to, to authorize. What is personal empowerment in the context of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism?
2. What is the source of true personal empowerment?
3. What part does the practice for oneself and others (jigyo keta) play in developing personal empowerment?
4. The dictionary definition of collaboration is to work together. What does this mean in the context of your group?
5. Describe your vision of your group as a collaborative team.
6. What part does Jigyo Keta play in creating a collaborative team?

SOMETIMES IT'S DISCOURAGING WHEN YOU KEEP TRYING OVER AND OVER TO ENCOURAGE A MEMBER TO PARTICIPATE MORE ACTIVELY WITHOUT APPARENT RESULTS. HOWEVER THE GOSHO SAYS:

"The sutra teaches that women, evil men, and those in the realms of Animality and Hell - in fact, all the people of the Ten Worlds - can attain Buddhahood. We can comprehend this when we remember that fire can be produced by a stone taken from the bottom of a river, and a candle can light up a place that has been dark for billions of years. If even the most ordinary things are such wonders, then how much more wondrous is the power of the Mystic Law."

Nichiren Daishonin "The One Essential Phrase"

OFTEN A SITUATION FEELS HOPELESS BECAUSE IT HAS BEEN THAT WAY FOR SUCH A LONG TIME. IT'S REALLY IMPORTANT THAT AS LEADERS, WE CHALLENGE THE LIMITS WE PUT ON OUR EXPECTATIONS, BOTH OF OUR OWN CAPACITY TO CHANGE, AND ALSO THAT OF OUR MEMBERS.

PRESIDENT IKEDA TALKS ABOUT DEVELOPING CAPABLE PEOPLE IN THE NEW HUMAN REVOLUTION. HE SAID,

Capable people definitely exist. The question is whether leaders can find them People can't help judging others according to their own standards. If you're logical and systematic, for example, you'll probably see ability in those who are also methodical and analytical. On the other hand, if you're impulsive and not prone to giving matters much thought, you'll tend to regard those who have similar tendencies as capable. Also, if you're extremely self-centered and full of your own importance, you cannot appreciate peoples' strengths and good points. Instead, you'll see only their faults. Ultimately, the ability to find capable people depends on whether we can see each others' strengths. And the only way to do this is to develop our own life-condition. If anything, I feel we have a multitude of capable members, each like a precious diamond. They simply need to be polished. It takes a diamond to polish a diamond. That's why we have to devote every ounce of our being to this task. This is what I'm trying to do with all my might right now.

The New Human Revolution, vol 2, p 117

7. Do you see yourself described in this passage?
8. How can we overcome our tendency to be judgmental?
9. Do you know of an experience in which a member became more active? How did it happen?

HERE ARE A FEW THINGS YOU MIGHT ASK A MEMBER TO DO TO HELP THEM DEVELOP THEIR PRACTICE FOR OTHERS. THIS LIST IS INTENDED TO FOSTER YOUR OWN IDEAS. (Note: not all of these suggestions will be appropriate for every member)

- Ask your member what he or she would like to do to contribute.
 - Tell about your own benefit which resulted from your jigyo-keta practice.
 - Ask member to choose and read (or just read) a Gosho or guidance passage at a meeting.
 - Ask the member to guide a new member through gongyo at a meeting.
 - Invite your member to relate a personal experience at a meeting or during a home visit. Or ask him/her to tell an experience he/she heard and was encouraged by.
 - Invite member to talk about some personal interest at a meeting, or to share a personal skill.
 - Encourage member to ask a question at a meeting. Or ask if you may ask their question on their behalf. If they don't attend the meeting, ask it anyway and report back to them what the response was.
 - If the member does not attend planning meetings, call and ask for his/her feedback or opinions regarding meetings.
 - Invite member to lead closing daimoku at the end of a meeting.
 - Ask the member to make copies of a study passage to be used in a meeting.
 - Invite member to go on a home visit with a leader.
 - If your group mails schedules or invitations, ask the member to join you in addressing envelopes.
 - Ask member to help you teach slow gongyo to a new person.
 - Invite member to join you in making simple handmade gifts for members.
 - Encourage member to participate in Community Center cleanup or reception duty.
 - Ask the member to make calls. Calls could be about upcoming activities, or to confirm that others have received mailings, or to confirm an address, to see if another member needs a ride etc.
 - Encourage member to participate in other activities such as Chorus, Lawn Crew, Boys and Girls Group, the Culture Department etc.
 - Ask member to help you find a certain article or passage in the World Tribune.
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PRAYER IS THE KEY TO SUCCESS IN ALL OUR EFFORTS. IN THE HUMAN REVOLUTION, PRESIDENT IKEDA ENCOURAGES LEADERS AT THE BEGINNING OF THE HISTORIC KANSAI CAMPAIGN:

Anyone would think that victory is impossible. . . and that's probably how you feel right now. But don't forget this marvelous Gohonzon we have. It has the power to transform what you'd normally think impossible into something possible. Those who give up before they try, thinking that it's impossible, don't really know the power of the Mystic Law. Only people who can bring forth the Mystic Law's power can succeed at anything they try. Nichiren Daishonin is clear on this. He states, "I am praying strongly that the Lotus Sutra will protect each and every one of you, no matter how tumultuous the world becomes. This I do as resolutely as a person determined to make a fire with water-logged wood or bring forth water from the desert." . . . As long as we only look at our situation with our ordinary reason, there won't be the slightest chance for us to win. But the Daishonin tells us straight out that the Gohonzon has infinite power. The only question is whether or not we believe him. If we think that we are really disciples of the Daishonin, we have to first of all pray powerfully to be able to carry out the kind of courageous practice that can make the impossible possible.

The Human Revolution, vol X