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RELATING THE INTERPERSONAL NEUROBIOLOGY OF DAN SIEGEL TO BUDDHISM, HUMANISM & HEALING

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This paper explores the power of spirituality to foster healing especially for developmental conditions such as Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and dissociation spectrum disorders. It relates the 'Relationship', 'Energy' and 'Information' elements in the interpersonal neurobiology of Dan Siegel (2001; 2010) to three virtues of faith 'Compassion', 'Courage' and 'Wisdom' in the humanistic principles and practices of Sokka Gakkei International (SGI) - a particular branch of Nichiren Buddhism.

The key elements of this Buddhist lay movement are Faith, Practice and Study. The beliefs are based on Shakyamuni's Lotus Sutra which was identified by the Japanese 12th century monk Nichiren as the most powerful and truthful legacy e.g. in preaching that man and woman alike can achieve Buddhahood in this lifetime. Study of the scriptures engages the verbal processing in the hippocampus area. Practice consists of recitation of Gongyo (excerpts of two key chapters of the Lotus Sutra) and Daimoku (chanting the phrase Nam-Myo-Ho-Renge-Kyo representing the title of the Lotus Sutra) stimulating Hypothalamus information processing. Faith is about the 'mystic law' that through pursuit of the virtues ANY problem can be overcome - creating a virtually fearless life state thus managing Amygdala issues to threats. In fact Nichiren Buddhists embrace difficulties as opportunities for growth.

The case of an Adult Survivor will be presented who overcame depression and despair brought about by 20 years of verbal, physical and sexual abuse to live a happy and fully engaged life - without medication - while persecuted by abusive family members and authority representatives.