

# Śaranagati

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## THE ART OF SPIRITUAL COUNSELING

Someone who gives spiritual guidance should have the following three qualities:

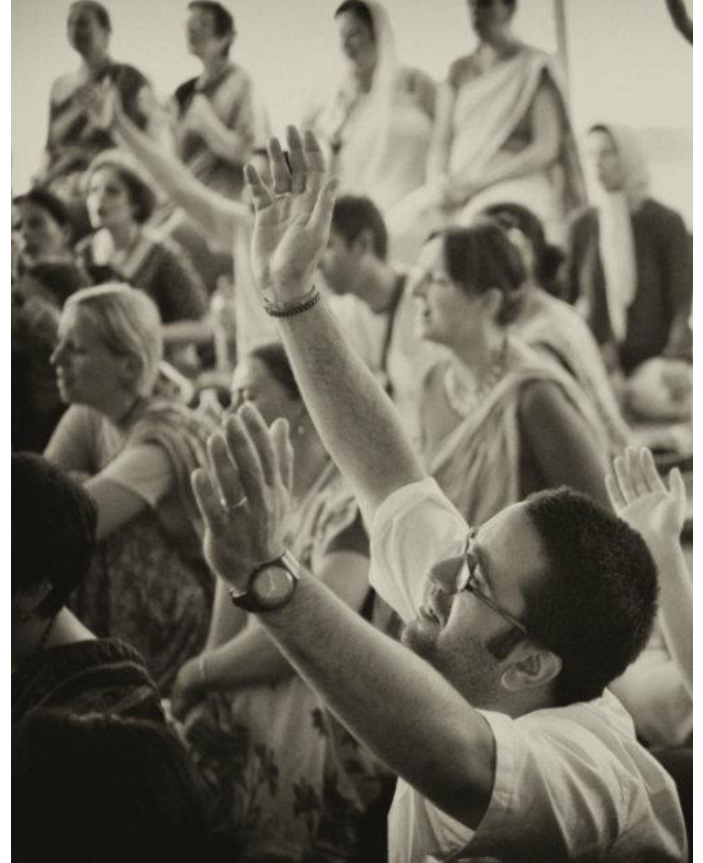
- 1) trustworthiness
- 2) accessibility
- 3) willingness to help

### 1. Trustworthiness

Since a counselor leads people into areas unknown to them, they must feel that they can trust him or her. Firstly, spiritual trustworthiness is based on how strong you are in your own spiritual practice, the results of which shine through your words and appearance. People can feel it. Secondly, you must be well connected with your spiritual master and the holy scriptures. By this people can see that you are in touch with higher intelligence.

### 2. Accessibility

A spiritual counselor has to be accessible to others. People should feel that they can approach you at any time and under any circumstance. You have to show genuine interest in their concerns.



### 3. Willingness to help

When you see people deviate from the path of spiritual growth, the question is not whether they are good or bad. The question is how you can help them to get back on the path. People crave for loving guidance. Be ready to help them as needed. However, this is only possible if you have created the safe harbor of trustworthiness and accessibility.

Always remember that the people who come to you are responding to the Lord's call within their hearts, "Look for someone who can help you on your spiritual path!" They have been sent by the Lord so they can progress towards him. Be the Lord's humble and grateful servant. Never place yourself between them and the Lord. Also, be aware of your limitations and direct people to more capable persons when necessary.

## ❖ FIVE PRACTICAL STEPS ❖

Spiritual counseling is the art of giving advice and inspiration in a way that brings out the best in others. For this we can apply five steps that will help us to have a good spiritual exchange in which Kṛṣṇa manifests himself.

### Step 1

Become conscious that the person in front of you is an eternal spiritual soul on his/her way in his/her spiritual journey. Everything that happens in that person's life is meant to help them progress in that journey. You are there to help them see things from the spiritual perspective.

### Step 2

Take on the observer role – and do not become “lost” in the apparent or external perspective. Try to look from a neutral position – almost like an unmoved witness. Listen attentively.

### Step 3

Pray for insight and permission to be able to inspire and help. Pray to become an instrument through which divine blessings flow.

### Step 4

Try to recognize the specific, unfulfilled needs of the other person. Empathy is required here: see and feel things from the other perspective. Help them to find ways to fulfill these needs in a spiritual way.

### Step 5

Encourage the person to understand the story behind the story. Everything and everyone moves under the sweet will of Kṛṣṇa. Help the other find the specific lesson to be learnt here.

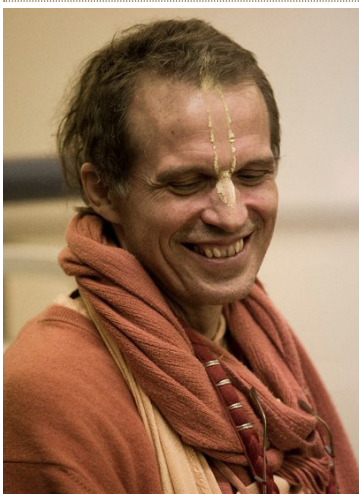


### A final word:

Spiritual counseling becomes easy, and successful, when one is trying to help from the spiritual platform of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Give your best and Kṛṣṇa will do the rest!

☪ From a lecture by Śacīnandana Swami, Island Iz, Croatia, June 6th, 2012 and an Amṛta Vānī training letter, published by Śacīnandana Swami

Photo by Mickey Shah



## ❖ MEET ŚACĪNANDANA SWAMI

upcoming seminars & events:

Jul. 30- Aug. 2	Balarāma-Jayantī Festival, New Māyāpur, France
Aug. 9-12	Śrī Kṛṣṇa Janmāṣṭamī, Goloka Dhāma, Germany
Aug. 19-27	Spiritual Cruise, Netherlands, Spain, France
Sept. 2-8	Kīrtan Mela, Germany
Sept. 10	Kīrtan Night with Marcus Schmieke, Berlin, Germany

You can find a more detailed schedule at [www.sacinandanaswami.com](http://www.sacinandanaswami.com)