

Welcoming And Listening Skills

This list may help you to reflect upon the attitude of welcome and the skill of listening that ought to be manifested during spiritual guidance sessions by a competent spiritual guide.⁽⁹⁾

A. Preparing For Each Session

1. The guide is prepared and has remembered what went on in the previous sessions and has recalled the pertinent facts that her directee has shared with her.

B. Achieving Rapport

2. The guide manifests a warm, accepting manner.
3. The guide communicates an accurate understanding of her directee's feelings, experiences, and behaviour.
4. The guide is able to be herself (not hiding behind a role), open, and spontaneous without overwhelming her directee. She is not defensive.

C. Art Of Listening

5. The guide is actively -- as opposed to passively or disinterestedly -- interested in what her directee is saying; that is, with ability to feed back feelings and enter into his experience.
6. The guide's non-verbal behaviour indicates that she is "for" her directee and is working for her directee's interests.
7. The guide helps her directee to speak about concrete and specific feelings and experiences in specific situations. She encourages relevant disclosure rather than story-telling or pious generalizations.

D. Art Of Silence

8. The guide is relaxed and at ease during pauses.
9. The guide does not interrupt or talk too much.
10. The guide communicates an understanding of what her directee only implies or hesitates to say or what he has poorly formulated. The guide helps him understand himself at deeper levels.
11. The guide's responses are made in a non-judgemental manner.

E. Art Of Discernment

12. The guide speaks the language of living faith, not simply that of

psychology or sociology.

13. The guide helps the directee understand the spiritual and/or theological/faith principle that is part of the prayer experience.

14. The guide is ready to disclose anything about herself that will enable her directee to understand his experience better; but the guide actually discloses self ONLY when it will help rather than distract him.

15. The guide is patient and gentle, allowing God to work, and yet is able to challenge or to confront him at appropriate times.

16. In a situation in which the directee is experiencing confusion or struggle, the guide helps him in isolating the issue involved whether it be psychological, social, spiritual, theological.

17. The guide manifests common sense.

18. The guide does not pretend to understand if she doesn't understand.

19. The guide shows an educated understanding of the dynamics of human behaviour.

20. The guide does not project her "pet" understandings upon her directee or find within him what exists only in herself.

F. Closing Each Session

21. The guide helps her directee to sum up the progress made in the session.

22. The guide and her directee together consider the grace to ask for or the next step(s) to be taken.

G. In General

23. The guide helps her directee gain greater freedom and independence.

24. The guide herself is prayerful and comes across as a person of faith.

25. The guide possesses an experiential, as well as theoretical knowledge of the spiritual life and is able to communicate this with confidence.⁽¹⁰⁾