

[Can Astrologers Be Spiritual Mentors?](#)

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MY TURN

Can Astrologers Be Spiritual Mentors?

Only if they are trained in counseling and steeped in personal spiritual practice

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For professional astrologers who encounter daily the hopes, fears, desires and aspirations of often desperate people facing real-life crises, predictive ability and technical expertise are not enough. They must develop the capacity to address the psychological needs of the client, above and beyond the basic interpretation of the horoscope. How many professing to be astrologers have received any kind of formal training in counseling skills, or even any informal preparation, which qualifies them to give advice to people on a variety of important issues?

How many times have we seen or heard about clients who have departed an astrological consultation feeling distraught, confused and discouraged about specific conclusions and predictions concerning future events in a person's life? Indians typically believe in karmic retribution and in astrologers' predictions, which they expect in any consultation. What the eyes see, the mind interprets according to one's expectations

and beliefs. A strong belief that an astrologer's predictions will come true will have a major effect upon one's perception and interpretation of the "objective reality" of events to come. Americans tend to believe they can alter their destiny through conscious choice, and prefer directions for personal, spiritual transformation. In either case, there is a large subjectivity factor and room for judgmental errors. It would be prudent to show discretion and humility in one's presentation, lest some error of judgment result in actual harm to the client. At the very least, predictive astrologers should speak in simple, clear language, according to the level of understanding of the listener, and not inundate the client with excessive technical jargon.

In Brihat Samhita (II.2), Sage Varahamihira describes the qualities of the ideal astrologer: "He must be clean, efficient, bold, eloquent, possessed of genius or ready wit, knower of the time and place, sincere, not timid in assemblies, not to be overpowered by his fellow students, expert, free from vices, well-versed in the performance of curative and preventive types of rituals, as well as in that of magic and bathing, engaged in the worship of Gods, observances or austerities and fast; possessed of great power generated by the wonderful achievements of his scientific knowledge and capable of answering queries made by others and suggesting remedial measures for troubles, other than the visitations of God." Knowledge of astrology must be complemented by spiritual practice and a religious life which enables the astrologer to be an instrument of the Divine, providing advice based on spiritual values and the wisdom of personal experience. The spiritual qualities which make a person a great yogi are the same attributes which contribute to eminence in astrology. Only a life lived in accordance with

dharma can produce the wisdom and loving kindness that can heal as well as inform.

As great as astrology is, we should also recognize its limitations, and maintain a clear understanding of its role in the context of our overall spiritual evolution. We should not lose sight of the unlimited, infinite, unbounded nature of our true Beingness, which is always beyond the realm of cause and effect. Astrology pertains to the interactions of cosmic forces in the realm of manifestation, and does not provide a direct path to realization of the Divine.

Stephen Quong, 47, has traveled extensively throughout India, Nepal and Sri Lanka. He began studying astrology in 1970.