

Five Ways to be a Good Spiritual Directee

**The following article is adapted from an interview with Fr. Walter Schu, LC.*

When someone is seeking to find a good spiritual director, there are certain qualities to look for: a good listener, a deep prayer life, practical, and down-to-earth.

Similarly, according to [Fr. Walter Schu, LC](#), an assistant professor of [Integrative Studies](#) at Divine Mercy University, there are also qualities that spiritual directees can cultivate to make spiritual direction more fruitful. Since direction involves a relationship between the director and directee, both of whom are tasked with listening to the promptings of the Holy Spirit, it requires both parties to do their part to make spiritual direction a place of growth, healing, and discernment.

Here are five approaches a spiritual directee can adopt to better receive the graces of spiritual direction:

1. Openness

It's important for the directee to be open: an openness of spirit, the ability to trust and open oneself to one's spiritual director with the good, the bad, and the ugly. One must be able and willing to confront the depths of one's sinfulness as well as the beautiful graces God bestows. This will bear beautiful fruit in spiritual direction. It has been said that, "our openness to our spiritual director is a mirror of our openness to God."

2. Docility

As a directee it is important to be docile to guidance. This is not to be confused with being passive. A soul that is docile is like a loving child that carries out his parents' wishes, not like a slave just doing what he is told. In other words, someone who is docile is ready and willing to accept direction, while also still fully engaging his or her freedom.

3. Commitment

Spiritual direction takes commitment, especially when things get tough. For example, when prayer gets dry, when we get bored, or when life gets busy, we may think that obstacles are a sign to quit spiritual direction. However, when we persevere and recommit ourselves to the work of spiritual direction, we avail ourselves to deeper growth. Additionally, a good director will also know how to notice obstacles and help a directee stay accountable.

4. Focused on prayer

It is important to remember to bring one's life of prayer to spiritual direction. Spiritual direction is not the same as therapy or pastoral counseling. It is important to share with your spiritual director the various 'lights' you have received in prayer, the style you tend toward (ie. petition,

thanksgiving, praise), and if you sense God's presence or your prayer seems dry. It can be helpful to share some context of your daily life and struggles since they can impact our spiritual life and vice versa.

5. Taking steps

It is good practice to finish a session with a goal or area of work between sessions, then share any progress or lack thereof with your spiritual director the next session. You and your director may notice that God is calling you to work more intentionally on a specific virtue or calling you to let go of a particular worry or burden.

While finding a good spiritual director is key, being a good directee in spiritual direction also helps to avail oneself to the movements of the Holy Spirit so that direction can be a place of fruitfulness and growth.

Visit our website to learn more about the [Spiritual Direction Certificate program](#).