

# Goofy Spiritual Ideas

Ram (James Swartz)

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**James:** Hi, Josephine. I am telling you in advance that your ego is probably not going to enjoy this letter very much, but since you wrote to me I feel the need to be direct with you. If you don't write back I will understand and I apologize in advance for what I say.

**Josephine:** Yes, I'm not clear what I want in life. I have never felt a burning drive to succeed. It's mostly been just a struggle to get by.

I think I picked on discipline because my *guru* has hammered me/the group he runs for having *tamasic* attitudes regarding meditation. His take on it is that we are all spoilt brats who are chugging along and that until we apply effort (he says effort is the only contribution we can make to clear seeing) then we'll never get anywhere. I can see the merit in that, but somehow it doesn't take me forward. But that's to do with the spiritual path. My effort is that I'm consumed with wanting to understand. I don't want to do practices - I want to know.

**James:** You are right on this point. You need to understand what you are trying to accomplish, what tools are available and how to use them.

**Josephine:** Your teaching on *karma yoga* is helping to the extent that it has significantly reduced or expelled the aggression towards others that I had gotten into the habit of. I had a victim chip on my shoulder to a degree - not always, but when I felt "unfairly" judged or misunderstood, I would get SO mad. I see that just throws up more bad *karma* and hurts only myself.

**James:** *Karma yoga* is great. It really works.

It sounds like this is a case of you thinking you are "right" or that you need to make things "right." Would you rather be "right" or happy? If it is true that you feel this way, then it is a kind of narcissism, thinking you are more important than you are. Actually, nobody really cares what we think and feel; they are too wrapped up in their own issues.

**Josephine:** So in terms of doing or not doing, what turns me on? I love to teach. I love to explain concepts in clear and simple terms that get past people's confusion. I also love to know, get my head around stuff that is taken for granted and really figure out the essence of whatever it is. I say that, but I only really apply that to spiritual stuff. I've got either lazy or else consumed by the quest to know the truth. I keep trying to teach what I think I've understood and to get people to see through the illusions that are causing them suffering. And I get so mad when people teach rubbish and gullible people take it in.

**James:** It sounds like the problem here is that this “teaching” is your desire. Are you doing this because you are sincerely requested to do it? There is a wonderful statement in the *Gita*: “Let not the wise unsettle the minds of the ignorant.” If you are getting angry I would say that you are not doing it in a dispassionate spirit – so it does not qualify as spiritual work.

**Josephine:** I feel I have to expose the lies and the nonsense.

**James:** Oh, my God, Josephine! Are you one of these self-appointed do-gooders, out to save the world from its stupidity?

**Josephine:** But it seems people like the way they see things, so I reached a point of feeling it was a waste of time.

**James:** Good. You are right about that too. It is none of your business what “people” think. In fact “people” are only your own mind. There are no “people” out there in the world. All these thoughts about others are really only thoughts about yourself. They are projections of your own stuff.

**Josephine:** I’ve been doing this primarily as my work in the field of sacred sexuality (or whatever you want to call it). You can imagine the minefield there – both in terms of people’s illusions around relationships and sexuality, as well as all the hogwash around *tantra*. I’ve fought an uphill battle, both to get a grasp of the essence of whatever “*tantra*” does offer and the barrier in public opinion and norms to whatever it was I’ve been offering. That’s just how it has gone and where I’m now stuck because I’ve been at it for so long. I still feel it has merit, but (a) I don’t have solid teaching and (b) there seems not to be a huge market for it. But I’m working around that – hence my not replying sooner. I have to carve out all the spiritualese from what I have to offer and cut to the chase without losing the value – if there is any.

**James:** So you are saying that you like sex and this caused you to gravitate to this field? Or are you sexually dysfunctional and think that sexual *tantra* can sort you out? Sex has merit for making babies and as a good bit of fun, but it has no spiritual merit, in my humble opinion. *Tantra* in the West is just a code word for sex. People like to dress it up in fancy spiritual language to justify it. Sacred sexuality? That’s a good one. It is like the dope smokers who say that marijuana is a “sacrament.”

**Josephine:** I’m not sure if I view money as evil or not. I don’t have a disdain for it. I love spending it – especially on others. I don’t have a desire to keep it. I think that’s been part of why I haven’t accumulated a safety net. It’s been a cross between live it up when you have it and a tendency to believe it shouldn’t be hoarded.

**James:** So what are you saying, Josephine? I don’t get it.

**Josephine:** Since your mail came through to me – I’ve been aware of a mindset shift

that, okay, I DO need money, and I see that I almost BELIEVE I won't be able to get it easily. I think I took on a belief in childhood, that supply was limited and that I didn't deserve that aspect of security.

**James:** With all due respect, I am a Vedanta teacher, Josephine, not a psychologist. This means that you need to want freedom and you need to be qualified for it, and then I maybe can help you. What good does it do for me to know what you think about sex and money? These kinds of issues should be laid to rest before you seek freedom. And childhood? It seems your mind is still fairly infantile. Your ideas about money are just plain crazy.

**Josephine:** Health is easy. I totally have no question that I can and should and do live in almost perfect health. Why not? I accept nothing less as normal. But I cannot seem to understand that around money. Or I'm too lazy to make the effort to create it. I want the universe to take care of it. Or someone else. I don't want to have my life and time caught up in making money when there's stuff I want to understand to free both myself and others from the lies/false beliefs that are the root cause of suffering.

**James:** This is another great example of confused thinking, Josephine.

**Josephine:** I'm clearly not following the right path. What is the right path!/??

**James:** You are right again. You are very confused and conflicted. The good news is that at least you know it. That is a good start. If you know you are confused, are you confused? Maybe you should just forget the spiritual bit altogether and try to be a normal person. But this may not be possible.

**Josephine:** I've read your book, yes. Not slowly and carefully yet. I want answers quicker than my focus on reading seems to allow.

**James:** It is clear that you did not understand it. It seems your mind is quite disturbed. Have you been to a proper therapist? It is meant to be read slowly and carefully. It is for advanced people. You are looking for a quick fix because you are desperate. I am not sure that you would understand it even if you took your time.

**Josephine:** I am desperate to be free of the illusion of self. I don't know if that is what you mean by self-enquiry. From the past I've week I have spent in Ruthless Truth, I have deeply enquired into whether there is a self as I see "myself." No, there is no substantial evidence for it. It's something I/we mistakenly arrive at because it seems there has to be a subject and an object in all experience. I fully understand that the stories of self are illusion. That doesn't stop me from reacting, to defend that self-concept still - and I'm not sure if that's just habit or what. Is this I'm describing what self-enquiry is?

**James:** No, Josephine. I am sorry to say. Honestly, I sympathize with your suffering,

but I think you have some psychological problems that need professional attention. You are not psychotic or anything serious. You are just quite neurotic. You need to get yourself together before you are ready for self-inquiry. Many spiritual people really need therapy, but they resist it because they are rebellious and think they can medicate themselves with some kind of “spiritual” stuff. It never works. It just becomes another layer of neurosis that has to be undone later.

**Josephine:** Thank you again for your input. I look forward to continuing the conversation.

**James:** Well, I did my best, Josephine. I am sorry I had to be so direct. Think of it as tough love.

~ Much love, James