

## Be Careful About the Company You Keep



Regardless of what others profess, they may not truly live by spiritual values. Be careful whom you associate with. It is human to imitate the habits of those with whom we interact. We inadvertently adopt their interests, their opinions, their values, and their habit of interpreting events. Though many people mean well, they can just the same have a deleterious influence on you because they are undisciplined about what is worthy and what isn't.

Just because some people are nice to you doesn't mean you should spend time with them. Just because they seek you out and are interested in you or your affairs doesn't mean you should associate with them. Be selective about whom you take on as friends, colleagues, and neighbors. All of these people can affect your destiny. The world is full of agreeable and talented folk. The key is to keep company only with people who uplift you, whose presence calls forth your best. But remember that our moral influence is a two-way street, and we should thus make sure by our own thoughts, words, and deeds to be a positive influence on those we deal with. The real test of personal excellence lies in the attention we give to the often neglected small details of our conduct.

Regularly ask yourself, "How are my thoughts, words, and deeds affecting my friends, my spouse, my neighbor, my child, my employer, my subordinates, my fellow citizens? Am I doing my part to

contribute to the spiritual progress of all with whom I come in contact?" Make it your business to draw out the best in others by being an exemplar yourself.