

Being a People Builder

Caru Das: Thanks to everyone for coming out this Sunday afternoon at five o'clock in Spanish Fork, Utah. Thanks to all who download these talks as podcasts from iTunes. We invite your comments, correspondence and feedback by emailing us at utahkrishnas@gmail.com. We also have a membership class at our website utahkrishnas.org. I'd like to thank those who have taken the membership class and become members. We couldn't do what we do without your help and support.

Everything is inspired by the teachings of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, who is the Founder-Acharya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

Today, we'd like to talk to you about being a people builder. I heard about a high school teacher named Helen. It was the end of the week, Friday, it was the end of the day. She was trying to take her students through a very, very difficult math exercise. They were getting upset, they were getting rowdy, they were getting restless, and so she had an idea.

She said, "Put aside the math exercise. Everybody get a piece of paper. On the left side of the piece of paper, write down the names of all your classmates. Just opposite them, on the right side of the piece of paper, write something that you like about them."

As soon as she suggested this, the mood lightened up. The students started laughing. The whole tension evaporated and dissipated. When the bell signaled the end of the day, everybody was in a much lighter mood than they'd been before. She'd come up with the exercise just to settle them down a little bit, but it seemed like it gave them a big, big boost.

Ten years later, one of the boys in that class, named Mark, had been killed in Vietnam. Helen and a number of his classmates were at his funeral. Mark's father came up to Helen, the teacher.

He pulled out an old, folded piece of paper that had been taped and ripped and retaped 100 times. With tears in his eyes, he said, "This was Mark's most treasured possession. He had it in the lining of his helmet when he was killed."

When the other classmates saw what Mark's father was holding, they also started pulling out from their purses, wallets and pockets [laughs] this piece of paper. The ones who didn't have it right on their persons admitted that they had it in a file, or a drawer, or a safe somewhere at home.

Helen was a people-builder. Being a people-builder means that you consistently find ways to invest in other people and bring out the best in them. You give without asking in return. You give well-considered advice. You speak faith into them. You build confidence and you challenge them to go higher.

All most people really need is just a little push, a little boost, a little encouragement. The fact is that none of us will reach our highest potential on our own. Every one of us can be a difference in someone else's life. It has to do with believing the best in others.

Jackie Robinson, the legendary baseball player, said, "The best coaches are those who make players feel like they're better than they really are."

An encourager sees things in other people that they don't even see in themselves. They study other people to see what their strengths are, to identify what they can do well and to make them aware of it through a single word of encouragement, to give them the confidence that they need to take that first, all-important step of faith.

Prabhupada, our spiritual master, at his birth, an astrologer was called and after looking at his horoscope and his lines, he said, "He will start a worldwide spiritual revolution."

As a small child, his father, Abhay Charan, taught him to play the mridangam drum. He taught him to play the harmonium. He encouraged him to worship his own little deities, to have his own festivals with the neighborhood kids there in Calcutta. He told his son, "You will become a great devotee of Srimati Radharani."

Later on as a young man, his friend, Narendra, pulled him, literally pulled him, to see a holy man who was in Calcutta. His name was Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati. Prabhupada came in. As was the custom, he bowed down. The holy man was sitting on the couch.

Immediately, without any light conversation, without any warming up or anything, Bhaktisiddhanta said, "You are a capable young man. You can spread the message of Lord Krishna all over the world."

Now, of course, everything happens according to Krishna's arrangement. It was Krishna's arrangement that Prabhupada do that, but – what if -- I mean, what if that single encouraging sentence hadn't been said?

Think of all the things that wouldn't have happened if that connection had not been made and if Bhaktisiddhanta had not immediately, without any preliminaries, gave him the mission and inspired him with the confidence to spread Krishna Consciousness all over the world.

Each and every one of us have the ability to stir up someone's dreams and give them permission to succeed. We all can light a fire in others that will provide a lifelong glow in their lives.

Prabhupada visited Australia one time, and none of us were really proficient cooks. We weren't proficient in any area of Krishna Consciousness. We were all just finding our way. Every day, some different devotee would try his hand at cooking for Srila Prabhupada. Some of the results were not all that palatable.

But one day, a plate of prasadam was brought to Prabhupada, and there were these beautifully puffed up, perfectly round puris on top of everything else. Prabhupada looked

at the puris. His eyes got big. He took a puri. He ate it. He said, "Who has made these pooris?"

We didn't even know, because there was no regular cook, so we inquired, "Who's cooking today?" "His name is Kurma." "Kurma," we told Srila Prabhupada. "He will go back to Godhead," Prabhupada said.

Today, Kurma is one of the most legendary chefs in the entire world. He has a syndicated television show all over Australia and Southeast Asia. He's published at least six or eight hardback, \$30-\$40, cookbooks, which are best-sellers. He travels the world, catering and cooking for exclusive yoga retreats, not only in Australia, but throughout all of Asia.

Imagine what might not have happened if Prabhupada had not given that single boost to him?

When Prabhupada first started the movement in New York, he got a few hippies to follow him. They'd been initiated. They had their names, but they weren't following our principles. Some of them were smoking, and who knows what else.

Prabhupada was spinning the globe, and he pointed to India, and he said, "Garga Muni will go to India, and he'll establish Krishna Consciousness in India. Then he pointed to Africa, and he said, "Brahmananda will go to Africa." Then he pointed to Europe, and he said, "Syamsundar will go to Europe."

If you'd been around at that time, you'd have known these guys could hardly even tie their own shoes, and you might have said, "Mm-hmm, OK, yeah. That's good wishful thinking, but now Prabhupada, what's plan B?"

There wasn't any plan B. The plan was that he believed in them, he inspired them, and because of his belief in what they could do, they rose to the level of that belief. Now, there are 500 Krishna Consciousness Temples all over the world, and farms, restaurants, and so on and so forth.

He was an encourager. Malati, one of the early disciples, she wrote this in the memoirs about Prabhupada, "Srila Prabhupada didn't come to exploit, but he definitely cared and was concerned for everyone who came to him. Never before, from anyone else in our lives, not even our parents, have we felt the love and care that Prabhupada had felt for us."

"Krishna Consciousness was a process of falling in love with Srila Prabhupada. We are responding to the warm, deep, great love that he offered us. You know you can either draw out the best in someone, or you can draw out the worst in them."

Studies show that 75 percent of prisoners, either their parents or their guardians, had predicted where they would end up. They planted the wrong seeds.

When a child is told to expect the worst, they become the worst. If only someone had believed in them, and taken the time to draw out their gifts, to listen to their dreams, to

see what they were good at, and then encourage them to be the best that they could be. If only someone had given them permission to succeed instead of predicted their failure.

I heard about Jan Paderewski, perhaps the greatest pianist that the world has ever created. When he was to leave his native Poland for the first time to play a recital in London, he asked an influential fellow countryman to give him a letter of introduction to a leading figure in the musical world in London.

That was given to him in a sealed envelope. Paderewski hoped that everything would go smoothly, and that he would never have to use the letter. In fact, he never did use the letter.

Many, many, many years later, when he was an old man, he found this sealed letter amongst his papers, that had never been opened. Just out of curiosity to see what the reference that had been given to him was, he opened it up and he read these words, "I just want to introduce Jan Paderewski, who plays the piano, for which he demonstrates no conspicuous talent."

On the other hand, being a seed-planter, a people-builder, don't become so focused on your own goals that you grow only yourself. Be on the lookout for people you can encourage. For 15 years, Vaibhavi taken various groups of juveniles that have gotten in trouble, made bad choices, under her wing.

These are kids that are either chronically truant in school, or they're suffering from some substance abuse, and they're definitely going down the wrong path early on in their life.

One group has come every week, for three hours a week, for 15 years. There are a couple of other groups that have come for about 10 years. Vaibhavi spends 10 to 15 hours a week with these kids. Vaibhavi is so brilliant, so capable. She built this temple. There is so much of which she is capable.

I have to admit, the thought has crossed my mind on more than one occasion, "How come Vaibhavi is spending so much time with these kids who are the downward slide?" But every once in a while, I'll meet one of those kids, and they'll tell me how coming here, and being under Vaibhavi, and seeing her purposefulness, and her focus gave them a new lease on life.

It helped to turn them around. Now, some of them they're happily married, well employed. About a year ago, I went into the local Jamba Juice up there in Brickyard Plaza, near where our temple is in Salt Lake City. There was a fellow behind the counter named Marlin.

He was smiling, and friendly, and as nice as you could be. He asked questions about each and every one of his customers. He wasn't just serving juice. He was dealing in people. Many of the customers who came through the door, he knew their names, their wives names and children's names. I've never seen anyone in the food service industry who was so good at what he does and so much into it.

I was dressed in jeans and a shirt and everything, but when he recognized the neck beads, that I was a devotee, he said, "You know, in my youth, I made some bad choices, and I was in one of these programs where they give you counselors as an alternative to jail, and you have to do so many hours of community service a week. I went to your Temple once a week for a year."

"I know Vaibhavi, and she's a great lady. She did a lot for me." He was just working there at a time, and a few months later, he proudly told me that he was promoted to manager of the shop. Now, he manages five or six of those Jamba Juices. He's happily married. He has great kids. He attributes a big part of it to that lady (Vaibhavi) over there.

Hari Sauri came through a couple of weeks ago. He gave a wonderful=20lecture here, beautiful thoughtful lecture. Hari Sauri is an old friend=20of ours. Vaibhavi met him on the street in Australia in 1971. She gave him his first "Back to Godhood" magazine, and he became a devotee.

He was from the south side of London. He had that south London accent. He had a rough upbringing. He was a street-fighter, and even after he became a devotee in Australia, he used to get into spats with other devotees. He was known as a rough-edged person.

In fact, he'd come from England to Australia, because in those days, Australia would give you a free ticket from England if you would go and work in the mines. After a few weeks of working in the mines, he came back. He moved into the temple. He gave a huge donation. He gave all of this money.

But he still continued to clash with devotees. He served in Australia for a few years, and then he went to Vrindavan. He went to Vrindavan, our holiest of holy places. He was acting as the temple commander. That means you have a crew of volunteers, and you keep everything clean.

One of his volunteers was kind of mouthing off to him one day. It escalated, and tempers flared. Hari Sauri reverted to his street upbringing and did what he was used to doing. He took the guy, and he head-butted him. It broke his nose right in the temple. Right in the temple.

The devotees were like, "This guy's finished. He's gone. You don't use violence in the Holy Dham (Place)." It was like the biggest scandal that had come along. The word came to Prabhupada, and Prabhupada recognized, rather than kicking him out, or censoring him, or making him feel bad, he recognized that this is a young man who needs someone to take him under his wing, inspire him with confidence, and give him some direction in life.

Prabhupada did not have a personal servant at that time, so he brought Hari Sauri on board to be his personal servant. For 18 months, Hari Sauri was wedded to Prabhupada at the hip. They ate together. They slept under the same roof. They became great friends. He wrote a number of books called "Transcendental Diary," about each and every moment, practically, that he spent with Prabhupada in those 18 months.

If you would have met him here two weeks ago, what a gentleman! I have also met him a couple of times, in recent years, and I've been so impressed by the kindness and consideration he shows for older devotees. He has become an exemplary human being.

What would have happened had not Prabhupada, at the time everyone else was running the other direction, if Prabhupada hadn't embraced him, brought him into his embrace?

Learn how to cast your votes of confidence.

I heard a story about Henry Ford in his early days, when he was struggling. He was introduced to Thomas Edison as, "A man trying to build a car that runs on gasoline." As soon as Edison heard this, his face lit up. He slammed his fists on the table, and he said, "A car that has its own power plant. A brilliant idea."

Later on, Henry Ford -- whose grandson, incidentally, is a devotee named Ambarish Das, and just spent \$20 million to help us build a temple in West Bengal. But that's another story. Henry Ford reminisces, "I thought I had a good idea, but I had started to doubt myself. Then came along one of the greatest minds that's ever lived, and gave me his approval. That was a turning point in my life."

Learn to cast your vote also, to be somebody's fan, to encourage them, to lift them up when they're down, to pray for them when they're struggling, to urge them to press forward.

In our scripture, Sukadeva Gosvami opens the great epic Srimad-Bhagavatam. The King Parishad is disoriented. He's just been cursed to die within seven days, and he's very tentatively asked a question of the great Sukadeva Gosvami. He doesn't know whether it's the time, or the place, or he's the right person, or he's asking the right question, so he's very tentative about the whole thing.

But Sukadeva Gosvami immediately says, " [foreign words] ." He says, "That is a great question. That is a great question. It will do good to people all over the world." What was the question? "What is the duty of all men in all circumstances, especially of those who are about to die?" And he had six days to live himself.

Sukadeva Gosvami said that was a great question. Everybody knows that when you praise, when you encourage someone, that is positive reinforcement! They might do something by accident or without any forethought or anything, and when you get praised them, that is the first step in them taking that behavior and making it habitual, making a pattern out of good uplifting behavior.

Sukadeva Gosvami said, that was great, keep it coming. And the whole 20,000 verses of Srimad-Bhagavatam is nothing more than questions and answers by Maharaj Parikshit and Sukadeva Gosvami.

Prabhupada was the same way also. Prabhupada would always say, "Do you have any questions?" He would preach for two or three minutes, and pause, "What do you think

about our Krishna consciousness? Do you have any questions?" Try to bring it out. Coax out the inquiry.

He didn't want us to be blind followers. He wanted us to understand the philosophy of Krishna consciousness deep down in our souls, because he knew if we were fortified with a full intellectual understanding, we would be fixed up devotees, we'd do something that would change the world.

He used to say the intellect is a next-door neighbor of the soul. So he wasn't content just to give a talk and have people sit and be passive and inert. He would always say, "Do you have a question? Do you have a comment?"

Sometimes he even asked his students to role-play. All right, you have no questions then take the role of an Impersonalist, Mayavadi. Let's have a mock debate. Take the role of an atheist. Let's go out at it, let's get into it, take the gloves off?

Always he was like drawing his disciples out, seeing what they got, challenging them to go to a higher level. I remember one time I arranged an interview between Prabhupada and a reporter from the main paper in Melbourne, called the Melbourne Age.

The reporter, he sat there, and the reporter didn't seem to be like the brightest light in the universe, he seemed kind of dull . He really didn't seem that interested. But Prabhupada spent like an hour.

I kept thinking, why is Prabhupada spending so much time with this guy? Maybe it was for me, because I also happened to be in the room, I don't know. But the guy asked a few questions and the questions were not so much to the point .

Prabhupada patiently explained how if you do good karma you get a better birth in the heavenly planets. If you do cruel, horrible, insensitive things to other living beings, you might have to take birth as an animal, but the optional to good and bad is devotional service, Krishna conscious activity, love of God, which burns up both results of good and bad karma.

Then the soul is released to go back to the eternal spiritual world. So, he very painstakingly spent about an hour explaining all these things to the fellow. He went away.

In the next morning, I was so excited to go out get the paper and you can imagine my disappointment when I read the headline, said "Swamiji says he will be an animal in his next life."

I came back and Prabhupada said, "Did you get the paper?" I said, "Yes, I got the paper. "Well, do you have it?" "Yes, yes, it's in my pocket here." "All right, read it."

I read the article, and the so called reporter had twisted everything Prabhupada said. But Prabhupada wasn't in the least bit upset or taken aback. Prabhupada had done his job, he'd been an encourager, he'd been a people builder. If the person doesn't want to get advantage of it, that wasn't his problem at all.

Prabhupada said, "How many times is the word Krishna mentioned in the article?" So I told him. He said, "How many people read this paper?" And I said about 600,000. Oh, 600,000 times names of Krishna. That's very, very good.

We all need someone to believe in us. Don't pretend that you don't need someone to believe in you even more than you believe in yourself. Someone to look beyond where you are now and to see your potential, where you could go.

In the beginning of the Bhagavad-Gita, Arjuna wasn't living up to his potential. He'd fought a lot of battles in the side of truth and righteousness. But as he looked across at his opponents in this particular instance, they were his friends, they were his teachers, they were people with whom he had a bodily relationship.

So he was about to abandon truth, he was about to abandon the right activity out of a weakness, a partiality and affection that was based on a bodily connection. He dropped his bow and he started to tremble.

He said, Krishna, I can't fight those with whom I'm physically related. Krishna immediately said, "Arjuna, that's not you, the Arjuna that I know he holds truth and righteousness up even above bodily connections and family, friends and country.

The Arjuna I know is the champion of truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. And even though these people are related to you, they are on the dark side, and if you don't oppose them, they are going to reap untold havoc on innocent citizens all over the world.

Arjuna saw Krishna's point of view. He rose to the occasion, he became everything that Krishna wanted him to be, he had his victory and we celebrate that victory and his choice inspires us now even 5,000 years later.

Especially in the beginning of the Bhagavad-Gita when Arjuna was faltering, Krishna used names like Bharatarsabha, are the descendent of a great dynasty, you are the subduer of the enemy, Dhanajaya, you are the winner of wealth. Just see how he is pouring into Arjuna, and inspiring him and challenging him to be everything that he could be.

The interesting thing is that people never tire of hearing compliments and encouragement. Am I right? You can go on and on and on, how wonderful they are and they'll never get bored and they'll never tell you to stop.

Oliver Wendell Holmes Sr. who was a great author and a great physician, he loved to hear compliments so much that he had a technique. After someone said something complimentary he would say, "I'm a trifle deaf, could you repeat that again a little louder?"

That's proof of how much hunger we have for praise. When you receive praise, don't pretend that it doesn't mean anything to you. Don't put on a show of false humility. Smile, look at the person in the eyes and say two words, thank you.

John Wooden, the legendary basketball coach of UCLA, used to tell his players that when you score a basket, always acknowledge the player who made a pass to you - nod, smile, point your finger, high five them, something to show your appreciation.

One of the players said, "what if he is not looking?" Coach would've said, "don't worry they will be looking."

Mark Twain said, I could live a whole two months off of one, good compliment. Speaking of Mark Twain and all these luminaries, don't leave out those people who are successful in life. Don't neglect to compliment them, don't assume that they are what they are because they could encourage and enthuse themselves.

Whenever anybody rises above the average, they're going to be a target, critics are going to come out of the wood work. Even people who are successful need to know that they are appreciated.

After his assassination, from the pocket of Abraham Lincoln, they pulled out a newspaper article, and, underlined in his own hands, was a quote from the reporter, that "Abraham Lincoln is quite possibly the greatest statesman who ever lived."

Now, why would he carry that around? Do you think he knew that? But he served this country during its most difficult time. He was criticized, he was lampooned, he was put down, he was characterized, he was ridiculed. Even this great man needed to be reminded that someone appreciated and believed in him.

It is said that if you praise, you'll be raised, and if you complain you'll remain.

Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu on the occasion of the Great Rath Yatra, chariot festival in Puri, he used to go to the Gundicha Temple. Lord Jagannatha is pulled down the ground route and he spends a week in Gundicha Temple which represents Vrindavan.

Only once a year, the temple is cleaned, the rest of the year just sits gathering dirt. So Lord Chaitanya, he made an annual ritual for him and his followers to clean the Gundicha temple. He didn't just send them down there, "You guys clean the temple while I'm high and mighty."

He went down. This is God himself, and his [devotional incarnation. He get down on his hands and knees, he got dust rags. If another devotee would make a pile of dust that was this big, Lord Chaitanya's pile of dust was a hundred times bigger than anyone else's. Even though he took that as personal service and he was absorbed and focused on that, he still found time to go around and wherever he saw someone else working nicely, he would specifically stop and give a word or two of praise to that person.

I don't know about you but I'd like to be a dream releaser, I'd like to be a wallet filler. The people in your life are not there by accident. Are you believing in them? Are you urging them forward?

As they succeed, so will you. Your success is their success. Your bringing out the best in others will also cause the best in you to also to be brought out. Remember, an

encouraging word will work wonders, be free with your compliments, get into the habit of building up those around you.

When you water those seeds in others, Krishna will make sure your own seeds are watered. He'll take you higher in this life than you would've thought possible and in the next life back home, back to God.

Thank you very much for your kind attention and if you receive this message, please repeat after me. Hare Krishna!

Congregation: Hare Krishna!

Caru: Hare Krishna!

Congregation: Hare Krishna!

Caru: Krishna! Krishna!

Congregation: Krishna! Krishna!

Caru: Hare Hare!

Congregation: Hare! Hare!

Caru: Hare Rama!

Congregation: Hare Rama!

Caru: Hare Rama!

Congregation: Hare Rama!

Caru: Rama Rama!

Congregation: Rama Rama!

Caru: Hare Hare!

Congregation: Hare! Hare!