

Anamchara - 7 ways to Soul Friendship

by Tony Cuckson

This article shares with you the seven Blessings of the Celtic idea of Anamchara meaning "Soul Friend."

"What does an Anam Cara do?"

An Anam Cara loves your essence.

They see you beyond your mask. This is the mask of persona. This is what you call personality. They see beyond the fear. They see the absence of love. This is love you withdraw from others and yourself. This is the love that is your real power. This does not mean they have to like YOU. You are the one that gets in the way of soul. Your soul is the light of love and it needs light. It needs the lightness of being. An Anam Cara will remind you simply "to be."

An Anam Cara lives close to the land.

They might be found roosting with chickens. They love the elements of fire, water, earth and air. They are elemental beings although they are more down to earth than mental. Some might consider they exhibit opposite traits. They love sensuality and sexuality. They love the play of Eros. This takes them on the wing. An Anam Cara will remind you to come to your senses and be sensational.

An Anam Cara guides you to the presence you are.

They are people of the silence. They listen. They do not debate. They do not fill you up with knowledge. They transmit the knowing of love. They touch you with beauty. This is not their beauty but the beauty of the Beloved. They move in the world as nobodies of import. They do not puff up your ego. They may build your ego up. They do so in order that you can disappear. This is in order that you can fly the coop. This is so you can enter the joy of leaving the prison house of never being enough.

An Anam Cara reminds you of what is important.

They guide you to knowing who you are. They take you into what are called in Ireland "thin places." They take you to the edge. They coax you to the edge. When you are trusting enough they push you. They know this is the only way for you to learn to fly. They know you are an eagle that was brought up in a society of chickens. The Anam Cara will take you soaring. The very air that will take you higher is learning trust and faith in your essential goodness.

An Anam Cara takes you to the source.

You will be taken beyond time and space to the very source of your being. This will be done using different techniques depending on which Anam Cara you talk with. There will be techniques to take you out of the constant chatter of the mind into the light heartedness of life beyond the chicken wire.

These techniques take you into ease and allow you to give up dis-ease.

An Anam Cara will affirm YOU.

You will be told that YOU are forever enough. This is because the Anam Cara knows that you are forever enough. They have seen beyond the limitation of the ego. They know the prison house of the little self. They know you hold the key to liberation. Only they might tell you that the door is always open. It was and never will be shut to you. They have trust that "all is well and all manner of things shall be well."

An Anam Cara does really care.

They know you are always held in the hand of the Beloved. They are not here to do anything for or to you. They are only there to facilitate your discovery that you are always enough. They know that what you need is not more of anything but a great big helping of "no thing." This gives your soul true rest. This is where you give up trying to live life and become life abundant. You become the flow of the essential. Nothing matters because it all matters. Ultimately they take you to love of soul.

Recognizing a soul friend

In her book *Hearing with the Heart*, Debra Farrington writes, "We need to surround ourselves with those who can help us discern and stay on the path, but we also need spiritual companions who can encourage us and, sometimes, be our champions. The process of learning to listen to God and follow God's call is never an easy one, and we need others who can help us stay focused, who can encourage us when the going gets tough."

Farrington goes on to name five key characteristics of soul friends:

1. **Soul friends know how to listen.** They are not afraid of silence. In fact, Farrington maintains, "they must be willing to listen for God as the third party in the conversation."
2. **Soul friends ask questions rather than give advice.** Offering solutions can often be a defense against entering fully into the pain of others. Soul friends "ask questions – sometimes hard and clarifying ones – that help us see God's will more clearly for

ourselves.”

3. **Soul friends don't judge, but they're not afraid to ask hard questions either.** As Farrington puts it, "If they are honest and care deeply about us they won't be afraid of asking questions that might be painful or difficult to answer.”
4. **Soul friends are good observers.** With the benefit of their more objective perspective, they can spot trends or patterns in our lives that we're too close to see.
5. **Soul friends admit that they don't have all the answers.** They know that while they can offer valuable input, our discernment process must be our own. "I told you so" is not a part of their vocabulary.

Farrington concludes, *"Obstacles to hearing and following our heart and paying attention to God's will cross our paths constantly. Loving companions can help us notice them, name them, and move ahead on the path to God . . . [Soul friends are] the people who see with the eyes and ears of the heart, with compassion, concern, and clarity. They are the ones who, when we think our only choices are to go forward or backward on the wheel, can help us discover that perhaps God is calling us to step off the wheel and go in a whole new direction."*