

Fifty Failure Factors

For a quick check on what *may* be behind counseling failure, consider the following factors:

1. Is the counselee truly a Christian?
2. Has there been genuine repentance?
3. Is there a vital commitment to the biblical change?
4. Are your agendas in harmony?
5. Do you have *all* of the necessary data?
6. Are you trying to achieve change in the abstract or concretely?
7. Have you been intellectualizing?
8. Would a medical examination be in order?
9. Are you sure that you know the problem(s)? Is more data gathering necessary?
10. Are there other problems that must be settled first?
11. Have you been trying to deal with the *issue* while ignoring the *relationship*?
12. Did you give adequate scriptural hope?
13. Did you minimize?
14. Have you accepted speculative data as true?
15. Are you regularly assigning concrete homework?
16. Would using a D.P.P. form help?
17. If this is a life-dominating problem, are you counseling for total restructuring?
18. Are you empathizing with self-pity?
19. Are you talking about problems only or also about God's solutions?
20. Have you carefully analyzed the counselee's attitudes expressed in his language?
21. Have you allowed the counselees to talk about others behind their backs?
22. Has a new problem entered the picture, or has the situation changed since the counseling sessions began?
23. Have you been focusing on the wrong problem?
24. Is the problem not so complex after all, but simply a case of open rebellion?
25. Have you failed to move forward rapidly enough in the giving of homework assignments?
26. Have you as a counselor fallen into some of the same problems as the counselee?
27. Does doctrinal error lie at the base of the problem?

28. Do drugs (tranquilizers, etc.) present a complicating problem?
29. Have you stressed the put-off to the exclusion of the put-on?
30. Have you prayed about the problem?
31. Have you personally turned off the counselee in some way?
32. Is he willing to settle for something less than the scriptural solution?
33. Have you been less aggressive and demanding than the Scriptures?
34. Have you failed to give hope by calling sin *sin*?
35. Is the counselee convinced that personality change is impossible?
36. Has your counseling been feeling-oriented rather than commandment-oriented?
37. Have you failed to use the full resources of Christ? (e.g., the help of the Christian community).
38. Is church discipline in order?
39. Have you set poor patterns in previous sessions? (e.g., accepting partially fulfilled homework assignments).
40. Do you really know the biblical solution(s) to his problem? (Can you write it out in thematic form?)
41. Do you really believe there is hope?
42. Has the counselee been praying, reading the Scriptures, fellow-shipping with God's people, and witnessing regularly?
43. Could you call in another Christian counselor for help? (with the counselee knowledge, of course).
44. Would a full rereading of your Weekly Counseling Records disclose any patterns? Trends? Unexplored areas?
45. Have you questioned only intensively? Extensively?
46. Have you been assuming (wrongly) that this case is similar to a previous case?
47. Has the counselee been concealing or twisting data?
48. Would someone else involved in the problem (husband, wife, parent, child) be able to supply needed data?
49. Are you simply incompetent to handle this sort of problem?
50. Are you reasonably sure that there is no organic base to the problem?

SOME DON'TS IN COUNSELING

(Sometimes useful to reread before each period of counseling)

DON'T ALLOW COUNSELEES TO:

1. Act on feeling
2. Avoid problems
3. Blame others
4. Lose hope
5. Remain undisciplined and disorganized;
6. Harbor grudges
7. Simply talk about problems
8. Stop with forgiveness
9. Talk about another behind his back
10. Shut off communication
11. Give up when they fail
12. Goof off on homework
13. Settle for solutions to immediate problems when wrong underlying patterns remain
14. Neglect regular prayer, Bible study, and church attendance
15. Leave without hearing the gospel
16. Generalize rather than specify
17. Use any other basis than the Bible for belief or action
18. Make major decisions when depressed or greatly pressured
19. Use inaccurate language to describe their problems
20. Call sin sickness
21. Hurt others in solving their own problems
22. Wallow in self-pity, envy, or resentment
23. Become dependent upon the counseling session
24. Set unbiblical agendas for counseling
25. Continue counseling in an uncommitted manner

Reference 6

SIGNS OF TEN COMMON PROBLEMS

SIGNS	PROBLEMS									
	1 Anger	2 Blame Shifting	3 Depression	4 Envy, Jealousy	5 Fear	6 Guilt	7 Rebellion	8 Self Pity	9 Sexual Deviation	10 Organic Problem
CROSS REFERENCES	(2),(4), (5),(6), 7,(8)	1,(4),5, 6,(8)	2,(4), 6,8	1,(3), (5),8	(1),2, (4),6,(8)	(1),2, (3),5,(8)	1,2, 6,8	1,(2), 4,5, 6,(7)	(2),(3), 5,6,8	(3),(1)
Failure to do daily chores			•					(•)		•
Slackening of interests			•				•		•	•
Withdrawal, avoidance	•		•		•	•		(•)	(•)	•
Frequently asks why? Dwells on past			•	(•)		(•)		•		
Loneliness			•	(•)	(•)	(•)	(•)	•		
Disorder of person, in home. on job			•	(•)	•	•		•		•
Muscular tension	•	•			•	•	•	(•)	•	•
Dry mouth, clammy hands, heart palpitation					•	•				•
Tiredness	(•)	(•)	•	(•)	(•)	•	(•)	•	(•)	•
Shyness			(•)		•	•			(•)	
Blue, sad, tears	(•)		•	•	•	•		•		•
Sensitive, touchy, irritable	•	•		•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Bitterness	•	•	(•)	(•)		•	(•)	•		
Suicidal tendencies	•		•	•	•	•	(•)	•	(•)	?
Violence (verbal or physical)	•	(•)		(•)	•	•	•	(•)		•
Communication breakdown	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Immobility Sleeplessness	(•) •	(•) •	• •	•	• •	• •	•	• •	• •	• •
Loss of appetite (weight loss)	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•		•
Excessive eating (v-eight gain)			•	•	•	•	•	•		•
Headaches	•	•		•	•	•	•	•		•
Sexual impotency	•	(•)	•		•	•			•	(•)
Hallucinations										•
Anxiety	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Bizarre behavior	(•)			(•)	•	•		•	•	•
Excuses, lies		•	•		•	•		•	•	
Trouble with people	•	•		•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Suspicion				•	•	•		•	•	•
Ulcer	(•)	•			•	•		•	(•)	•
Colitis	•	(•)	(•)	•	•		•	•		•

Key:

Numbers = cross references to items listed across top of table (e.g., 1 = anger).

• = probable presence of sign.

() = possible presence of sign.