

Counseling

What is Counseling?

Description

The dictionary describes counseling as provision of advice or guidance in decision-making, in particularly in emotionally significant situations.

Counselors help their *clients* by counseling them. Counselors also help clients explore and understand their worlds and so discover better ways of thinking and living.

A common factor in most counseling situations is that the client is demoralized, distressed or otherwise in a negative state of mind about something.

Counseling can be for one person or a group (typically couples and families) and may be delivered through a number of methods, from face-face dialogue, group work, telephone, email and written materials.

Counseling is largely a voluntary activity whereby clients must wish to change and collaborate willingly with the counselor. Early counseling activity in some cases involves bringing referred clients to this point of readiness.

Results of counseling can include:

Insight and understanding of oneself, with greater self-awareness.

Changing of one's beliefs and mental models.

Increased acceptance and appreciation of oneself.

Increased emotional intelligence.

Increased ability to control oneself and one's urges.

Development of skills and abilities that require self-management.

Improved motivation towards actions that are good for one's self.

Understanding of others and why they act as they do.

Increased appreciation and care for others.

Improvement in relationships with others.

Changing of relationship with family, friends and others.

Making amends for past negative actions.

In summary, counseling typically leads to resolution of a living problem, learning of some kind and/or improvements in social inclusion.

Counseling is also a profession, with national associations and control bodies, who, along with academics, have explored its detail further.

Discussion

Contact between counselors and clients may be through a third party who refers the client. The client may also seek out the counselor for help with their troubles.

Counselors often subscribe to particular schools of thought as to the most effective and useful way of helping. A critical variable in this is the extent to which the solution to problems are provided by the counselor or by the client. This leads to two very different roles for the counselor: problem-solving or facilitator. A facilitative approach may also be used when a more open exploration approach is used.

There are hence a number of theories in counseling, including those held by the client and those held by the counselor. Theories provide simplified models for understanding and ways of acting. They help the counselor how to perceive the client and decide what to do. They may also provide the client ideas for what to think and do differently.

Counseling is particularly common at transition points in a person's life, where they are moving from the familiar to the strange, going from child to adult, single to married and so on. These changes can be difficult and the counselor can help their client successfully make the change, both emotionally and cognitively.

There has been ongoing debate about the difference between counseling, coaching and therapy and the boundaries are not at all clear. Therapy can be more clinical but counseling still addresses serious issues, whilst 'coaching' can effectively be a euphemism for lighter forms of counseling. Generally, counseling tends to have a more social focus,

whilst therapy and coaching are more individually focused.

Historically counseling in personal issues was done by close relatives, friends or the local priest. Although counsel has always been given within families, parents and siblings are not always the best people to do this when they are effectively a part of the problem. Likewise with friends, the penetrating need of counseling means a fun-based friendship is not the best place to go.

Acceptance

The first and most important thing that the counselor does is accept the person without conditions, no matter what has happened. They do not judge, and in so doing allow the person to talk about their problems without fear of criticism.

Acceptance is always a good first step towards developing a good relationship as when the counselor accepts the person, then the person is much more likely to accept the counselor and whatever they might suggest.

Listening

An important and another relatively easy part of counseling is to listen to the person, attentively and without judgement.

Even if the counselor does nothing else, having someone to listen to their woes can be a big help the other person. When you tell someone your troubles it makes you think about them and in doing so you may discover things you can do by yourself. Also when a problem is spoken in this way it can seem less important than when it is being churned over within the internal mind.

Concern

Beyond acceptance is showing of concern about the person and their situation. Displays of empathy and care create a closer bond which further increases the likelihood that the person will accept advice given.

Advice

Advice by non-professionals is often moderate and based on common-sense, rather than the more specific direction for action that the counselor or therapist might give.

Such advice may be criticized for being a bit weak and vague, but it at

least nudges the other person into action.

Risks

There are of course risks when a person who has not been trained in counseling or therapy finds themselves in such a role.

Judging

When the other person opens up and talks about their problems, it is very easy for the counselor to take judgemental position, criticizing the person for their actions. This is not a good way of building an effective working relationship as it casts the people into roles of the judge and the accused.

Bad advice

A real danger in an amateur situation is that the 'counselor' gives the person advice that, whilst it is well-meant, is ineffective or makes the situation worse.

Reversal

It is surprisingly easy for amateur counselors to reverse the situation, for example when the other person describes a problem the 'counselor' responds with a related problem of their own.

This happens as the person's problem simply triggers a memory in the counselor. In everyday conversation this is common and the roles are easily reversed mid-flow. In a counseling context the focus is on the other person and the counselor may only briefly mention a situation of their own for the purpose of showing empathy and not to seek sympathy or advice. (Changing mind.org)

We are encouraged to seek counsel in the Bible and also people gives counsel whether solicited or unsolicited. Some counsels reshapes destiny while others mars them. In this article we will look at some places in the Bible where counsels helped and where it caused problems.

Moses and his father-in-law

The children of Israel were in the wilderness after heir miraculous deliverance from Egypt. And of course wherever humans are there will be issues to dealt with. The people brought their cases to Moses to resolves disputes and seek the face of God. Moses was the only judge and he will sit from morning to night attending to people. His father in law that came

for a visit observed this and has this piece of advise for Moses:

Exo 18:17-25 KJV 17 And Moses' father in law said unto him, The thing that thou doest is not good. 18 Thou wilt surely wear away, both thou, and this people that is with thee: for this thing is too heavy for thee; thou art not able to perform it thyself alone. 19 Harken now unto my voice, I will give thee counsel, and God shall be with thee: Be thou for the people to God-ward, that thou mayest bring the causes unto God: 20 And thou shalt teach them ordinances and laws, and shalt shew them the way wherein they must walk, and the work that they must do. 21 Moreover thou shalt provide out of all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place such over them, to be rulers of thousands, and rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens: 22 And let them judge the people at all seasons: and it shall be, that every great matter they shall bring unto thee, but every small matter they shall judge: so shall it be easier for thyself, and they shall bear the burden with thee. 23 If thou shalt do this thing, and God command thee so, then thou shalt be able to endure, and all this people shall also go to their place in peace. 24 So Moses hearkened to the voice of his father in law, and did all that he had said. 25 And Moses chose able men out of all Israel, and made them heads over the people, rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens.

Seeking counsel using Urim

God provided means of seeking his face to the people of Israel in order to determine His mind regarding His will on certain matters. The high priest carry them in his breastplate.

Num 27:21 KJV And he shall stand before Eleazar the priest, who shall ask counsel for him after the judgment of Urim before the LORD: at his word shall they go out, and at his word they shall come in, both he, and all the children of Israel with him, even all the congregation.

Ballam counsel

Ballam was hired by Balak to curse the children of Israel, however God turned his curses to blessing and there was no way he can curse the children of Israel. He however gave counsel to Balak on how he can defeat the children of Israel by making them to sin against their god. Because when they do that God will turn against them and he Balak can overpower them. In Num 25 the children of Israel were involved in immorality and that caused plaque in the camp. Many died and perished. What happened? Why the sudden changed in the attitude of God's people? It was in Num 31 that we know what took place.

Num 31:16 KJV Behold, these caused the children of Israel, through the counsel of Balaam, to commit trespass against the LORD in the matter of Peor, and there was a plague among the congregation of the LORD.

2Pe 2:15 and Rev 2: 15 bore testimonies. Of course when the children of Israel eventually entered into Canaan, Ballam was executed.

Gibeonite trickery over Joshua

In the military campaign to occupy Canaan, the Gibeonite came with moulded bread and sour victuals as evidence of their long journey to the place where the children of Israel were. They showed their worn out sandals. The people observed all these and were compassionate with them rather than seek the face of God in the matter.

Jos 9:14-18 KJV 14 And the men took of their victuals, and asked not counsel at the mouth of the LORD. 15 And Joshua made peace with them, and made a league with them, to let them live: and the princes of the congregation swore unto them. 16 And it came to pass at the end of three days after they had made a league with them, that they heard that they were their neighbours, and that they dwelt among them. 17 And the children of Israel journeyed, and came unto their cities on the third day. Now their cities were Gibeon, and Chephirah, and Beeroth, and Kirjathjearim. 18 And the children of Israel smote them not, because the princes of the congregation had sworn unto them by the LORD God of Israel. And all the

congregation murmured against the princes.

They have to lived with the people they ought to destroyed.

Saul sought counsel

Saul had history of neglecting the commands of God and when he had problem he went to God to seek counsel but he was not answered.

1Sam 14:37 KJV And Saul asked counsel of God, Shall I go down after the Philistines? wilt thou deliver them into the hand of Israel? But he answered him not that day.

Rather than repenting Saul resorted to self help and in the latter part of the book of 1Samuel he went to consult necromancers.

1Ch 10:13 KJV So Saul died for his transgression which he committed against the LORD, even against the word of the LORD, which he kept not, and also for asking counsel of one that had a familiar spirit, to enquire of it;

Amnon was David son who fell in lust with his half sister Tamar. He has a friend Jonadab who counselled him on how to get Tamar.

2Sa 13:5 KJV And Jonadab said unto him, Lay thee down on thy bed, and make thyself sick: and when thy father cometh to see thee, say unto him, I pray thee, let my sister Tamar come, and give me meat, and dress the meat in my sight, that I may see it, and eat it at her hand.

He did what Jonadab told him and raped his half sister but he eventually lost his life when Absaloam avenged the shame of his sister Tamar.

Some friends are evil but it is much evil to listen to their counsel. Jonadab ought to have rebuked Amnon for having such silly thoughts about his sister in the first place.

Ahitophel counsel

The bible recorded that when this man gives counsel its like a man sought counsel from the lord because of his wisdom and accuracies. However when David knew that he was part of the conspirators against

him along with his son Absalom, David made a prayer:

2Sam 15:31 KJV And one told David, saying, Ahithophel is among the conspirators with Absalom. And David said, O LORD, I pray thee, turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness.

As at the time David made this prayer Ahithophel had not been called upon to give his counsel. When he was eventually called upon, his counsel was perfect but because David had prayed and took action also, Ahithophel counsel was turned down and he committed suicide.

Rehoboam and the young men counsel

He succeeded his father Solomon on the throne. However because of many taxes imposed by his father on the people, they came to meet him to help reduce the burden. He started well by asking counsel from the elders that stood before his father. They advised him but he also sought counsel from his peers.

1Ki 12:13-15 KJV 13 And the king answered the people roughly, and forsook the old men's counsel that they gave him; 14 And spake to them after the counsel of the young men, saying, My father made your yoke heavy, and I will add to your yoke: my father also chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions. 15 Wherefore the king hearkened not unto the people; for the cause was from the LORD, that he might perform his saying, which the LORD spake by Ahijah the Shilonite unto Jeroboam the son of Nebat.

The kingdom went into civil war and Rehoboam lost out.

Evil counsel exposed by Elisha

The King of Syria planned to evade Israel but each time they made the plan in their closets, God revealed them to Prophet Elisha who informed the king. With that the king of Israel saved himself several times.

2Ki 6:8-10 KJV 8 Then the king of Syria warred against Israel, and took counsel with his servants, saying, In such and such a place shall be my camp. 9 And the man of God sent unto the king of Israel, saying, Beware that thou pass not such a place; for thither

the Syrians are come down. 10 And the king of Israel sent to the place which the man of God told him and warned him of, and saved himself there, not once nor twice.

When we are told of the planned of the enemy we should not take it with levity.

The Psalm of Messiah has something to talk about counsel

Psa 2:2 KJV The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, saying,

The meaning is, that they were engaged in deliberating against Yahweh in respect to his purpose to place the "Anointed One," his King (Psa 2:6), on the hill of Zion.

Great advise and instructions on counsels

Psa 1:1 KJV Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.

The ungodly man has his counsel and he who walk in it will soon stand in the way of sinner and it is only a matter of time before he joined the mockers of religion.

Psa 33:10-11 KJV 10 The LORD bringeth the counsel of the heathen to nought: he maketh the devices of the people of none effect. 11 The counsel of the LORD standeth for ever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations.

The meaning is that all the plans and purposes of nations that conflicts with God's purposes are nullified and brought to nothing.

Pro 11:14 KJV Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counsellors there is safety.

The word "counsel" here properly means "steersmanship," "pilotage". Everything will be disarrayed but when you have good counsellors, things take shape.

Pro 15:22 KJV Without counsel purposes are disappointed: but in the multitude of counsellors they are established.

When a man plans to do something and hastily engages in it without adequate consultations with himself and others to arrive at concrete decision, he may end up a failure.

Pro 19:21 KJV There are many devices in a man's heart; nevertheless the counsel of the LORD, that shall stand.

Man's device will not have success, unless God governs it, whose purpose is unchangeable.

Pro 20:18 KJV Every purpose is established by counsel: and with good advice make war.

Be careful and considerate in important plans.

Pro 24:6 KJV For by wise counsel thou shalt make thy war: and in multitude of counsellors there is safety.

Counsel just like strength is necessary to be considered before engaging in wars and in other life matters. It is better to take many counsels before embarking on such a campaign.

Isa 8:10 KJV Take counsel together, and it shall come to nought; speak the word, and it shall not stand: for God is with us.

This is an address to the foreign nations who wanted to overrun the Jewish nation. Their command will not stand and their counsel will not be executed.

Isa 9:6 KJV For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

The word "wonderful" and "counsellor" is joined together in the original text and it means "extraordinary strategist"

Isa 11:2 KJV And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the

spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD;

By the Spirit of counsel He will be able and qualified to give proper counsel to men. We too need to exercise it.

Nebuchadnezer and the counsel of Daniel

He had a dream where he was turned into an animal. Daniel counselled him to repent but pride would not let him. Eventually the dream he himself saw came to pass.

Dan 4:27 KJV Wherefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable unto thee, and break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by shewing mercy to the poor; if it may be a lengthening of thy tranquillity.

Pride seems to run in the family as his grandson Belshazzar fell even though the same Daniel gave him counsel to repent after a hand wrote his judgement on the wall.

Dan 5:23 KJV But hast lifted up thyself against the Lord of heaven; and they have brought the vessels of his house before thee, and thou, and thy lords, thy wives, and thy concubines, have drunk wine in them; and thou hast praised the gods of silver, and gold, of brass, iron, wood, and stone, which see not, nor hear, nor know: and the God in whose hand thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways, hast thou not glorified:

Dan 5:30 KJV In that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain.

Jesus and the Sanhedrin

A man with withered hand had just been healed on the Sabbath day and the best reaction of the Sanhedrin is to take counsel against the Lord to destroy Him.

Mat 12:14 KJV Then the Pharisees went out, and held a council against him, how they might destroy him.

May the counsel of the enemy to destroy you and your household not succeed.

Counsel was taking to trap Jesus in His word

Mat 22:15 KJV Then went the Pharisees, and took counsel how they might entangle him in his talk.

Be careful of what you say and in the presence of whom you say it. We are without fear because He promised to give us a wisdom which the adversary will not be able to contend with.

Counsel was taken to put Him to death

Mat 27:1 KJV When the morning was come, all the chief priests and elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death:

Counsel was taken after His death

They gave large some of money to the soldiers to enable them twist the story about the resurrection of Jesus. This was done after they took counsel together.

Mat 28:12 KJV And when they were assembled with the elders, and had taken counsel, they gave large money unto the soldiers,

They took counsel against the disciples

After Jesus accession, the disciples were forbidden to preach in the name of Jesus. When they refused to yield to them, they took counsel to put them to death.

Act 5:33 KJV When they heard that, they were cut to the heart, and took counsel to slay them.

Counsel against Saul

After his conversion and subsequent preaching championing what he had opposed before, the Jews took counsel against him.

Act 9:23 KJV And after that many days were fulfilled, the Jews took counsel to kill him:

During his trial, counsel was taken against Paul by forty men who vowed not to eat or drink until Paul was killed.

Act 23:21 KJV But do not thou yield unto them: for there lie in wait for him of them more than forty men, which have bound themselves with an oath, that they will neither eat nor drink till they have killed him: and now are they ready, looking for a promise from thee.

Another counsel was taken to kill Paul when he was in the boat. They thought the prisoners may escape and the Roman rule is that you will pay with your life for any prisoner that escape.

Act 27:42 KJV And the soldiers' counsel was to kill the prisoners, lest any of them should swim out, and escape.

Conclusion:

It is important to seek counsel and stick to good counsel that are based on the principle of the word of God. Any counsel contrary should be discarded.

Referencs:

changing mind.org material

King James Version of the Bible

Open source commentaries of Bible

English dictionary